



University of
South Australia

SOWFI
SAVE OUR WILDLIFE FOUNDATION INC.

CARING FOR CARERS: PROMOTING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF WILDLIFE VOLUNTEERS



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY PRACTICE

PROJECT REPORT

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Agency:

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Incorporated

Project Dates:

27th of April 2021 to 25th of June 2021



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Revision

Revision Date	Version No.	Revision Description
20 th July 2021	1.1	Changes made from university supervisor's feedback.

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Name, Title.	Signature	Date of Issue	Version

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name, Title and Organisation	Date of Issue	Copies

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BO: Burnout
CF: Compassion Fatigue
FB: Facebook
LTO: Long-term outcome
MTO: Medium-term outcome
OT: Occupational Therapy/ist
PCP: Participatory Community Practice
PF: Project Facilitator
ProQOL: Professional Quality of Life
SA: South Australia
SOWFI: Save Our Wildlife Foundation Incorporated
STO: Short-term outcome
TL: Team Leader
UniSA: University of South Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Land

This project was conducted on the land of Kurna people. We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kurna people as the custodians of the lands of this land. We pay respect to Elders both past, present, and ongoing. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and connection to the land.

We would like to acknowledge the following people for supporting us throughout the project:

Members of SOWFI

For making us feel welcomed and supported throughout the project. Special thanks to everyone that met with us, we really appreciate and respect your willingness to contribute to the project by sharing your experiences.

Reference Group members (alphabetical order):

Jacques Klop, Katrina Baker, Kendall Laffey, Natalie Logan, Marian MacLucas

For your time, interest, and contributions to the project. We appreciate your input and feedback regarding the direction of the project and the development of the project resources. Special thanks to Kendall, for showing interest in the continuation of the project and volunteering to further develop project resources and tools.

Marian MacLucas, SOWFI Chairperson

For your continued support, interest, and ideas throughout the project. We really appreciate everything you did assist us in working with the community and the Board.

The SOWFI Board

For your enthusiasm, encouragement, and interest in our project. Thank you for letting us be a part of the Board meetings and giving us the opportunity to share our project outcomes and recommendations.

Karen Darling, Agency Supervisor

For your knowledge, passionate enthusiasm, and support in the direction of the project. This project would not have been possible without you.

Amy Hawke, University Supervisor

For your interest in the project and the continuously helpful support and feedback. We learnt a lot about an OTs role in community development through our meetings.

Ben Seller, Course Coordinator

For your continued effort and guidance throughout the scoping and project phase.

University of South Australia

For providing us with this unique placement opportunity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

‘Caring for Carers’ was a Participatory Community Practice project facilitated by 4th-year Occupational Therapy students Joshua Kelleher and Ngan Van from the University of South Australia. The aim of the project was to develop the sustainability of wildlife volunteers by promoting health and wellbeing.

This project was conducted alongside Save our Wildlife Foundation Incorporated (SOWFI), a not-for-profit wildlife volunteering organisation that provides rescue, care, and rehabilitation of orphaned, sick, and injured native animals of South Australia (SOWFI n.d.). SOWFI places a large priority on evidence-based research and the equitable and fair treatment of their volunteers. Due to these values and their awareness of the growing literature revolving around the health risks that wildlife volunteers may experience such as CF, BO and trauma, SOWFI wanted to learn more about how these health risks affect their volunteers and how they can further support them. The proposed focus of the project was to identify the risks that wildlife volunteers experience and the supports that they require, to develop appropriate strategies to ensure the volunteer role is sustainable and satisfying. Project Facilitators (PF) completed a needs analysis by meeting with SOWFI members, reading past online posts by SOWFI members, discussing with other wildlife organisations, and consulting literature that discussed the needs of wildlife volunteers. The prioritised need was identified as the development of a resource to improve the community’s knowledge of health risks such as compassion fatigue (CF) and burnout (BO), which aligned with the focus that was originally proposed by SOWFI.

The needs analysis was implemented from week 1 to week 4, and 14 SOWFI members were met with to discuss their experience as wildlife volunteers and what further support they feel they need. 3 unique past needs expressed by SOWFI members was gathered by going over all posts from the public SOWFI page and the private SOWFI group; and by reading every SOWFI Newsletter. 3 Wildlife organisations discussed the health risks their wildlife volunteers experience and the supports they provide, these 3 organisations also expressed interest in learning more about the outcomes of the project. 15 peer-reviewed journal articles were analysed to gather 8 needs.

The action plan was implemented from week 4 to week 5. The most consistently discussed needs from the needs analysis were identified and presented to the reference group, which was a group of 5 SOWFI members that consisted of representatives of each wildlife volunteering role (carer, rescuer, team leader, Board member). The reference group then voted between further developing the team system and developing a resource to improve the community’s knowledge of health risks such as CF and BO to identify the need to prioritise for the project. The latter was voted for by 4 of the 5 members.

The implementation phase went from week 5 to week 7. Through discussion with the reference group and feedback from the agency supervisor and the Board, 4 resources were developed, and 1 tool was identified. The main resource developed was a health and wellbeing resource that discussed the risk factors and signs and symptoms of CF, BO and trauma; coping strategies; self-care activities; and protective factors of wildlife volunteering. From this resource 3 key slides were developed to be integrated into all SOWFI trainings and orientations to succinctly present the most

important aspects of the health and wellbeing resource. An outline of a group self-care workshop that discusses coping strategies, self-care, mindfulness, resilience, and compassion satisfaction was developed for SOWFI members to run. A handout was developed from the self-care workshop that describes different mindfulness activities that SOWFI members can undertake. The Professional Quality of Life tool (ProQOL) was identified as a suitable tool to assist SOWFI members in identifying feelings of CF, BO and trauma while also providing suggestions on how to prevent and manage them.

The evaluation phase occurred throughout the project, however during weeks 7 and 8 the developed resources were provided to the Board, the reference group and 3 other SOWFI members for feedback before finalising the resources.

The dissemination occurred in week 9. The SOWFI Board Chairperson was provided with all the resources to disseminate to the members of SOWFI. A summary was made that briefly explained the project and indicated where each resource that was developed will be available, this will also be disseminated to the members of SOWFI. The Board was also presented with the recommendations developed throughout the project and agreed to the principles of each recommendation.

Throughout the project, a Community Empowerment approach was utilised to increase the knowledge and confidence of SOWFI and its members. This was achieved by highlighting the issues, involving the community in problem-solving and decision making, and developing an outline for future action. This approach was also influenced by the principle of client-centred practice and the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model by considering all aspects of the volunteer's life and ensuring the developed resource was relevant to the community's needs. Client-centred practice is the principle of working collaboratively with a client by considering and utilising their opinions and strengths (Sumsion 2000). The PEO encourages exploring the relationship between a person, the environment they interact with and the occupations they perform to better understand how they positively and negatively influence each other.

The sustainability of the project will be supported by the recommendations developed throughout the project, the wildlife organisations identified that are interested in the health and wellbeing of their volunteers, and the team of SOWFI members that will oversee the progression of the project.

The key recommendations identified throughout the project were the implementation of the self-care workshop developed, the implementation of the ProQOL tool, the further development of resources developed throughout the project, providing more social opportunities for SOWFI members, and further supporting new rescuers.

INTRODUCTION

SOWFI was established in South Australia (SA) by a group of wildlife volunteers who aspired to develop an organisation that provides evidence-based practice through applying knowledge from science-led research into the animal care practices taught and performed by SOWFI members. In addition, SOWFI has an active management structure that fulfil various roles including a Board consisting of volunteers with skills and experience in professional settings such as advertisement and management, as well as multiple committees with their own priorities and structures.

SOWFI operates an efficient not-for-profit and volunteer organisation that provides a 24/7 rescue response to care for SA native animals (SOWFI n.d.). SOWFI's mission is to provide care for orphaned, sick, injured and displaced wildlife and relieve suffering through effective rescue & rehabilitation, releasing back into the wild whenever possible (SOWFI 2019).

Wildlife volunteers support wildlife animals in need of care and are involved in wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release of animals. Wildlife volunteers require skills, commitment, and training to successfully rehabilitate an injured wild animal and rear orphans (Englefield, Starling & McGreevy 2018). Wildlife volunteers experience many positive emotions while working with animals, such as self-compassion, compassion satisfaction and happiness (Polachek & Wallace 2018). Being a wildlife volunteer is a very fulfilling role that brings many positive experiences; however, it is also a very emotionally and physically demanding role that can cause negative factors such as CF, BO, trauma and grief. This growing literature discussing the potential negative factors of wildlife volunteering has assisted SOWFI in identifying the need to learn more about these health risks and their prevalence within the SOWFI community.

Compassion fatigue, burnout, trauma and grief

CF has been defined as a 'state of exhaustion and dysfunction biologically, psychologically and socially due to prolonged exposure to compassion stress' (Englefield et al. 2019; Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). A person is at an elevated risk of developing CF if they are compassionate, empathetic, and involved in treating trauma (Caro 2019). These traits can be seen in wildlife volunteers, as most join because of their strong feelings for wildlife and the environment (Haering et al. 2018). Wildlife volunteers are also consistently exposed to the pain and suffering of the wildlife animals they rescue and rehabilitate. CF can lead to a declined level of care and compassion towards wildlife animals due to increased stress, feelings of confusion and helplessness (Caro 2019).

BO occurs when exposed to constant emotional pressure and excessive workload and is a gradual development initiated by long-term emotional exhaustion (Caro 2019). BO is defined as feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach 2003). BO occurs in wildlife volunteers due to financial pressures, time management, overextension, and the decreased recruitment number of new wildlife volunteers (Englefield et al. 2019).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined by Seides (2010, p. 725) as 'an anxiety disorder that develops from events that are interpreted as traumatic'. The term direct trauma is used when someone experiences or witnesses a distressing situation that negatively affects them (Moir & Van

den Brunk 2020). Secondary traumatic stress (STS) is the reaction that caregivers experience due to long-term exposure to and caring for victims of trauma, where the only difference to PTSD is direct exposure to the original trauma (Andrukonis, Hall & Protopopova 2020). Wildlife volunteers are susceptible to both direct trauma and secondary trauma from situations such as: seeing distressing animal deaths, having to care for animals in unfortunate situations and having animals pass away while in care.

There are multiple events and experiences of loss during wildlife volunteering that may cause grief as they are frequently exposed to the suffering and death of wildlife during rescues and rehabilitation (Englefield et al. 2019).

Prevalence

The literature that explores the mental health of wildlife volunteers is limited, however, some studies discuss the prevalence of issues such as CF, BO and the leading factors such as grief. A descriptive cross-sectional survey of 30 wildlife carers in New Zealand conducted by Yeung, White and Chilvers (2017) showed that most of the 30 carers that completed the survey reported a medium level risk of both CF and BO. A survey of 316 Australian carers that actively foster orphaned joeys for hand-raising and injured adult mammals for rehabilitation and release showed that 28% of those carers experienced moderate to severe grief, which can lead to both BO and CF (Englefield et al. 2019). Haering et al. (2018) explored the experiences and opinions of wildlife volunteers in NSW through a questionnaire and face to face meetings with volunteer team leaders. A key finding was the high prevalence of volunteer burnout reported by team leaders. Although the prevalence of CF, BO and trauma are not explored in-depth, they are mentioned in most of the literature that discusses the health risks of wildlife volunteers (Caro 2019; Englefield et al. 2019; Englefield, Starling & McGreevy 2018; Haering et al. 2018; Pospisil 2014; Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). The consistency of which these health risks are mentioned throughout the literature shows that this is an issue that many wildlife volunteers experience.

PROJECT RATIONALE

IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT

SOWFI places a large priority on evidence-based research and the equitable and fair treatment of their volunteers. Due to these values and their awareness of the growing literature revolving around the health risks that wildlife volunteers may experience such as CF, BO and trauma, SOWFI wanted to learn more about how these health risks affect their volunteers and how they can further support them. The project was proposed by Karen Darling, a rescuer, carer, and Board member of SOWFI with a focus on identifying the specific risks that SOWFI volunteers experience and the supports that they require to develop appropriate strategies to ensure the wildlife volunteer role is sustainable and satisfying.

Key risks to the health and wellbeing of volunteers include seeing distressing animal deaths, having to care for animals in unfortunate situations and having animals pass away while in care. Literature has identified that wildlife volunteers experience health risks such as CF, BO and trauma during common aspects of the role (Englefield et al. 2019; Haering et al. 2018; Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). During environmental disasters, wildlife volunteers are further exposed to these risks. Wildlife rescuers and carers are first responders for wildlife during intense bushfire seasons, and this places huge demands on them (Backyard Buddies 2020).

Two Green Threads (n.d.), a community for wildlife volunteers that recognises the challenges of the volunteer effort in this unique sector states:

Years of drought, bushfires and floods and habitat reduction have devastated wildlife habitats and species numbers. We, the people who care for our wildlife, are experiencing this effect firsthand. This means the pressure and personal draw on wildlife rehabilitation groups and individuals is increasing, and we need to be able to continue to respond to this demand.

Wildlife volunteers can be exposed to health risks that can affect multiple aspects of their lives, such as their emotional and physical health, and their interactions with colleagues, friends, and families (White et al. 2021). Wildlife volunteers have been exposed to multiple natural disasters in recent years further increasing their exposure to risk factors. Therefore, it is essential that they receive the appropriate support to assist them in identifying, managing, and preventing CF, BO and trauma. There is a study that identified that animal carers and volunteers may not have the resources to identify signs of CF and BO compared to social services professionals, who are qualified with extensive training, knowledge, and tools to treat CF and BO (Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). As such, wildlife organisations require more support to assist their wildlife volunteers in navigating the multiple health risks that they may experience while caring for and rescuing native wildlife.

APPROACHES

SOWFI's values revolve around the effective care and advocacy of wildlife animals and the fair and equitable treatment of the volunteers that look after and rehabilitate those animals. The health, wellbeing and sustainability of their wildlife volunteers are important issues to SOWFI, as they wish

to support their volunteers as efficiently as possible and maintain their number of volunteers so they can continue to care for any incoming wildlife. Therefore, the conceptual approach that is used throughout this project was the community empowerment approach, which aimed to assist SOWFI in increasing the knowledge and access to resources and help maintain their volunteer's health and wellbeing during and after the completion of the project.

Community Empowerment

The community empowerment approach revolves around including the community in identifying priorities, problem solving and giving them the opportunity to increase their knowledge and confidence in discussing such topics. In this approach, the role of the professional is shifted to more of a collaborative or advisor position, where more roles and opportunities are provided to members of the community (Cheers & Wilkinson 2008). Empowerment is defined as the mechanism by which people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their affairs (Christens 2012). Therefore, throughout this project, the goal was to build capacity and work alongside the agency and the community by highlighting the issue; delivering and providing education about using the resources; and developing an outline for future direction and resource development.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The key OT Principles that will be used alongside this approach include a client-centred practice and the PEO model. The approaches support the goal, which is to work alongside the agency and community and build capacity for the sustainability of the care of wildlife animals.

Client-Centred Practice

Client-centred practice is an important approach in OT that enforces a collaborative approach, as the strengths and opinions of the clients can be efficiently considered and utilised through respecting and working with them (Sumsion 2000). In a community setting, the goal of client-centred practice is to increase the power shared within a community and its capacity for leadership (Restall, Ripat & Stern 2003). This goal shares common themes with the aim of the community empowerment approach, as it intends to shift the power between the PF and the community to provide more opportunities for the community to make decisions and lead.

The PEO model

The relationship between the person, environment and occupation is explored in the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model, which can be seen in image 1. Occupational Performance is the relationship between the person, the environment, and the occupation they are performing (Cooper et al. 1999). Observing the interactions between all aspects of the client helps identify the strengths they possess and the current issues that are affecting their occupation. By considering the person, environment, and occupation, the PFs will be able to create a project that addresses multiple aspects of the community.

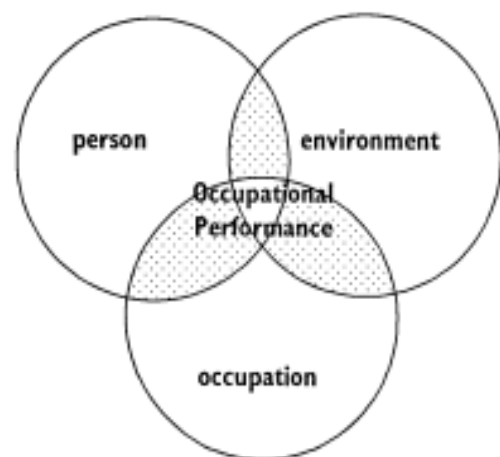


Image 1: PEO Model (Cooper et al. 1999)

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Project Aim:

To develop sustainability of wildlife volunteers by promoting health and wellbeing.

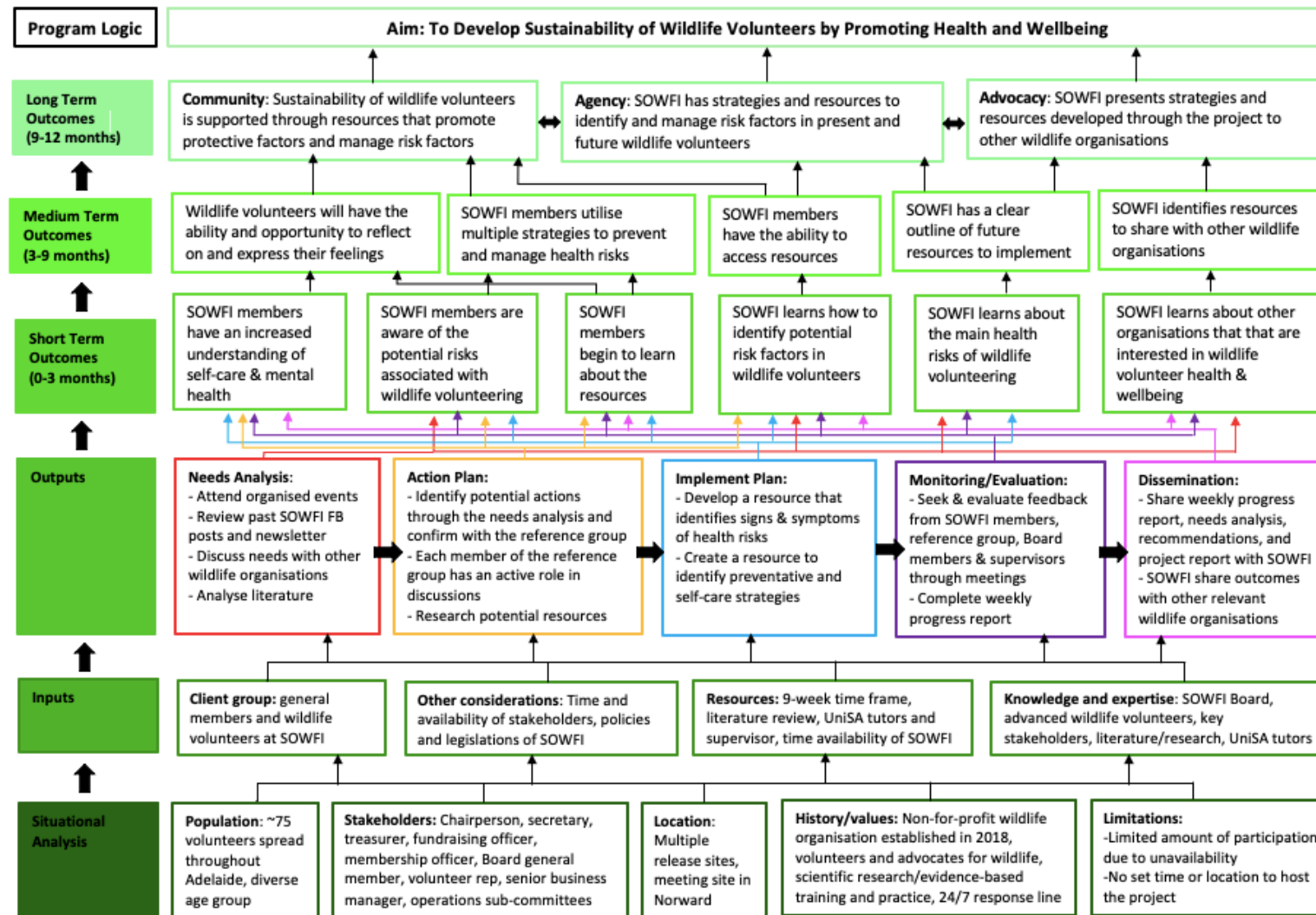
Project Objectives:

These 3 key objectives identify the desired outcomes of the 9-week project.

1. **Community:** By the end of 9 weeks, wildlife volunteers will have tools and resources to increase their awareness of risk factors and protective factors.
2. **Agency:** By the end of 9 weeks, SOWFI has a strategy to support their present and future wildlife volunteers, and an outline to further develop resources to sustain wildlife volunteering.
3. **Advocacy:** By the end of 9 weeks, SOWFI has knowledge about other wildlife organisations that are interested in the wellbeing of wildlife volunteers and how they address wildlife volunteer's health and wellbeing.

PROGRAM LOGIC

The Program Logic is a visual diagram that reflects what was implemented in the project to achieve identified project outcomes.



PROJECT METHODS

The project methods table was used to monitor and evaluate the project progress. The table identifies activities that have been conducted to achieve project community participation and project outcomes.

Some changes to the evaluation questions developed in the project proposal were made to reflect the results of the project process more succinctly.

Step 1. Needs Analysis (Weeks 1-4): Identifying the different types of needs that exist within wildlife volunteers.	
Key Evaluation Questions	Results
How well do the participants of the activity understand the purpose of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PFs asked questions during the interviews to highlight the member's understanding of the project. Questions asked were: "what are you expecting to see from this project?" and "what outcomes are you expecting from this project?". SOWFI members that were interviewed showed an understanding of the aim of the project by identifying expectations that related closely to the project outcomes regarding increasing knowledge of health risks in volunteering and improving support given through the team system structure.
How successful was each activity in learning about the different needs of the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FB Posts - Posted an introduction post and progress report posts in weeks 1-4 (average of 44 views out of 55 members) in the private SOWFI FB group. 17 members engaged with the posts through likes and comments. Contacted 14 people and successfully interviewed 9 SOWFI members either face-to-face, on Zoom or over the phone. Formal interviews - Formally interviewed 9 people after receiving engagement on FB. 6 people showed interested in being a part of reference group. Themes presented are discussed in the normative needs below. Interview questions are presented in Appendix A. Parklands Project - 1 member of SOWFI organised and attended the Park Lands Project. PFs attended and created a "Wildlife friendly garden poster" (Appendix B) to raise awareness and promote SOWFI as an organisation. SOWFI Picnic event - ~15 members of SOWFI attended the SOWFI picnic with their families. PFs received needs from 4 people at the event through informal interviews. Main topics discussed included promoting SOWFI to the public, increasing interactions with team members and providing more support for TLs. Survey - Attended advertising subcommittee meeting and they suggested creating a survey. Survey focused on asking questions regarding the supports SOWFI members currently utilise. Posted on FB page along in week 4, received 1 response. Wildlife rescue course – Attended for the opportunity to meet more SOWFI members. Had a brief meeting with 1 SOWFI member regarding the supports they receive and utilise.

<p>How well did the felt, expressed, comparative and normative needs align?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt need - Met with a total of 14 members out of 72 active members through FB engagement, SOWFI picnic event, training workshops, face to face meetings and Zoom to discuss their experience as wildlife volunteers. Needs identified (No. in the bracket correspond to the amount of responses received): Team systems (7); addressing the survival rates and wildlife animal's quality of life at the beginning of joining the organisation (7); resources for health risks such as CF and BO (6); spreading awareness of SOWFI and their role as volunteers (4); training new wildlife volunteers (4); communicating with SOWFI members outside of their team (2); option for volunteers to get assistance when unwell/feeding every 2-3 hours (1). • Expressed need - Identified 2 unique expressed needs by reading all the posts on the public 'Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc' FB page and private 'SOWFI Team Rescue & Rehab' SOWFI FB group and reading all the SOWFI newsletters. The needs found were asking for support in writing letters to government bodies and asking for information regarding where to release animals. • Comparative need - Emailed 10 wildlife organisations, received 3 responses via emails and met with 1 over Zoom to discuss how they support their volunteers regarding mental health risks such as CF and BO. Ideas discussed include a buddy system for new volunteers, health and wellbeing resources being provided at training, links to extra information provided after training, multiple options to seek support from organisations (species coordinator, volunteer support/call-line, head office) and social opportunities for members. • Normative needs - Identified 8 unique normative needs through journal articles found in the scoping phase and throughout the project (total of 15 articles searched, 10 used). Literature identified the need for wildlife volunteers to have a better understanding of CF and BO and its effects, have a buddy system/opportunity to talk with other rescuers/carers, share responsibility on challenging decisions such as euthanasia and releases, and address reduced self-care and wellbeing. Other needs from the literature include addressing roadkill, reducing the demands of the role, and increasing recruitment, increasing financial, mental, and emotional support provided to volunteers. • 3 of the needs aligned (felt needs, normative needs, and comparative needs), these needs were addressing knowledge of health risks, team/buddy systems and opportunities to meet other members of the community.
<p>Defining the different types of needs: Felt need: What SOWFI members say they need. Expressed need: Needs that SOWFI members have publicly voiced in the past. Comparative need: Comparing the supports of similar communities. Normative need: Professional opinion on the need of a community. (Talbot & Verrinder 2014)</p>	
<p>How relevant are the needs identified to the current aim of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key themes for community needs identified across all activities included: Wildlife volunteers experiencing BO, CF, trauma; limited communication within teams; and lack of resources to support the role of being a wildlife volunteer regarding the commitment, challenges, and the health risks. • Needs found relate very closely to the aim originally developed through community events and interviews.
<p>Summary:</p>	<p>Many unique needs were identified throughout the needs analysis. 2 key areas that were identified as needs for the SOWFI community were support in team system structure and the development of resources to address the health risks involved in becoming a wildlife volunteer.</p>

Step 2. Action Plan (Weeks 4-5): Analysing the information from the needs analysis to prioritise the most important need alongside the community.	
Key Evaluation Questions	Results
Are all relevant stakeholders included?	5 members out of 14 that showed interest in the project agreed to be a part of the reference group. Members of the reference group consisted of wildlife volunteers of all roles (carers, rescuers, TLs, Board member).
Do all participants have an active role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 members out of 5 contributed to the conversation through suggesting ideas of how the needs can be addressed. • Other members were given multiple opportunities to contribute but voiced they were happy with what was being said and preferred to listen.
To what extent are participants involved in decision making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFs presented a mind map (Appendix C) to members of the reference group. PF's summarised the 6 most discussed needs. Each member agreed to vote between the 2 most identified needs during the needs analysis: the team system structure, and a resource to improve the community's knowledge of health risks such as CF and BO. The need that was most voted and prioritised by the reference group was a resource to improve the community's knowledge of health risks such as CF and BO. The PFs was not involved in this vote. • Ideas given by participants of the reference group were added into the outline of the implementation, these ideas were: a way for volunteers to self-assess how they are feeling; exploration into ideas to promote debriefing between team members and TLs; and ideas for activities at the next social event.
To what extent did key stakeholders feel comfortable sharing and contributing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFs asked the group if everyone knew each other. Each member of the reference group (5 members) said they did which supported a comfortable atmosphere as interpreted by the PFs. • Each member participated in the voting poll on Zoom to prioritise the need. • 4 members out of 5 engaged in the conversations during the meeting, 3 members spoke out during the voting about their reasoning behind their vote and 4 members engaged in the discussion about what the resource will look like and how it will be implemented.
How satisfied are the project facilitators with the current progress of the action plan development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reference group came to an agreement and identified a need. The prioritised need was to promote the health and wellbeing of wildlife volunteers by creating a resource to improve the community's knowledge of health risks such as CF and BO. • The identified need aligned with the original project aim found in the scoping phase. • The action plan was completed 1 week earlier than expected, which provided more time to focus on the implementation.
Were all participants satisfied with the developed action plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 member out of 5 voted for the need that was not chosen and gave their reasoning about their choice saying they would prefer the further development of an existing support than a resource that just goes online. PFs reassured the member that this implementation will also have slides at training and orientations, physical workshops and a physical copy of the health and wellbeing

	<p>resource. The member reported satisfaction with the explanation and was happy that it was clarified. PFs also reassured the member that the other need would be considered in the recommendation table for SOWFI to address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members reported satisfaction at the end of the meeting when asked what they felt about the plans highlighted.
Summary:	<p>The reference group identified the prioritised need to be increasing the community's knowledge and understanding of the risks involved in being a wildlife volunteer such as CF, BO and trauma. This will be addressed by creating a resource to implement the information we find regarding signs & symptoms of these risks and how to manage in collaboration with the reference group. Other ideas that come through discussions with the reference group will also be considered for implementation.</p>

Step 3. Implementation (Weeks 6-7): Developing and implementing a plan to address the need that was prioritised.

Key Evaluation Questions	Results
How well does the resource address the need originally identified in step 1?	<p>The original need identified during the scoping phase “To develop sustainability of wildlife volunteers by promoting health and wellbeing”, is congruent with the resources created as they focus on increasing awareness of the health risks that a wildlife volunteer can face and available coping strategies and self-care options that are effective in preventing and managing said health risks. The addition of a health and wellbeing resource and a self-care workshop allows volunteers to have a better understanding of their health and provides comprehensive options for volunteers to explore and improve their health & wellbeing (Appendix D and E).</p>
To what extent are stakeholders involved in the development of the resource?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and wellbeing resource: During the Week 6 reference group meeting 4 out of 5 members provided feedback and strategies on how the resource can be further developed and implemented. They included: adding a risk factor slide; adding a mental health helpline slide; ideas for team-building strategies at community events; and different forms of engagement with the current PowerPoint resource. The resource was modified and developed to incorporate their ideas (Appendix D). • Self-care Workshop and Resource - Reference group thought a “self-care” workshop should be implemented by SOWFI. PFs agreed with the reference group that it would be more engaging and beneficial for volunteers to have the opportunity to practice using these coping strategies, so they feel more comfortable using them. This replaced the initial idea of creating a workshop on the entire resource that was created by PF. 1 member volunteered to run the self-care workshop. Agency supervisor suggested creating a separate resource that revolves around only “self-care” (Appendix F). • 3 key slides - Board was shown 3 key slides that will be implemented into all training and orientations (Appendix G). They provided feedback on one of the 3 slides having too much information and not enough of a specific direction but praised the other 2 slides for having thorough and concise details. The first slide was adjusted according to their suggestions which was then approved by the agency supervisor who is also a member of the Board. The species coordinator, who was a part of the reference group and developer of most of the training PowerPoint slides stated that she was happy with the slides and had no issue with them being implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) - 'A way for volunteers to self-assess how they are feeling' was one of the reference group's ideas for the implementation. The ProQOL was identified as a suitable tool, as it provides individuals the opportunity to answer questions that relate their feelings relating to CF, BO and trauma while also providing suggestions on how to prevent and manage them. 1 member volunteered to adjust the ProQOL tool to make it more suitable for wildlife volunteers. Members of the reference group were given a week to trial 'The ProQOL self-assessment tool' to determine if it was relevant to the community and gave their opinions on its accessibility and effectiveness. In week 7 reference group meeting, 2 of the 3 members utilised the tool and both reported satisfaction with it. • Agency supervisor was shown all resources created and feedback provided was considered and implemented.
How satisfied are the Agency, Community and Reference group with the resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference group verbally expressed that they were happy with the final version of the health and wellbeing resource. • The Board members and reference group members reported satisfaction with the 3 key slides resource. • The person who volunteered to run the self-care workshop provided positive verbal and written feedback about the outline that was created. There were no further suggested changes. • The 1 -page mindfulness resource also received praise from all present members and no further feedback for changes was provided. • The reference group members verbally expressed that the 'ProQOL self-assessment tool' was easy to use and appreciated that it was available for them to use.
How satisfied are the project facilitators with the progress of the implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference group members agreed to trial and identify the ProQOL to see if it was relevant to the community. This activity was successful. • Feedback from reference group, Board and agency supervisor assisted in finalising the resources and achieving positive outcomes. • Comprehensive range of resources were developed that received positive feedback. • Health and wellbeing resource was developed and finalised early which allowed PFs to focus on the development of further resources such as the mindfulness handout and the self-care workshop, which otherwise would have been a recommendation for SOWFI to develop.
Summary:	<p>The 3 main resources developed provides information about signs and symptoms as well as preventative and coping strategies for CF, BO and trauma. The implementation also resulted in the identification of the ProQOL tool for members of the SOWFI community to utilise to further manage their own health and wellbeing. PFs received positive feedback from the reference group, Board members and members of the SOWFI community throughout the implementation regarding the resources, the content that they cover and their design.</p>

Step 4. Evaluation (weeks 1-9): Evaluating and monitoring the progress of the project outcomes.	
Key Evaluation Questions	Results
To what extent was relevant information provided to key stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly progress reports (average of 43 views out of 57), the mindful activity handout (39 views out of 57), the 3 key slides (43 views out of 57), and an outline of future directions (41 views out of 57) were provided to SOWFI members through the private SOWFI FB group. Findings of the needs analysis, drafts and finished versions of the resources and short-term future outcomes were provided and discussed with members of the reference group through 3 meetings. Findings of the needs analysis, drafts and finished versions of the resources and recommendations for future actions were provided and discussed with members of the Board through 2 meetings. Needs analysis activities and findings, results of action plan, reference group discussions, developed resources and recommendations for future action provided to Agency supervisor throughout weekly meetings.
To what extent was the need addressed?	<p>The need identified was to increase the knowledge of SOWFI members of health risks such as CF, BO and trauma. The health and wellbeing resource were praised by the agency supervisor and reference group for covering all aspects of the need, this resource will be accessible as a PDF and PowerPoint online. A physical copy will also be at all SOWFI trainings and orientations, where the 3 key slides that present the most important points of the resource will also be presented, which was praised as a good idea by the Board and the reference group. The self-care workshop will provide a way for volunteers to learn more about ways to manage and prevent the effects of CF, BO and trauma.</p>
How satisfied are the relevant stakeholders with the final outcome/resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members verbally expressed satisfaction with the 3 key slides and the changes that were made to reflect their feedback (refer to question in step 3, 'To what extent are stakeholders involved in the development of the resource?'). They also expressed satisfaction with the recommendations presented during the handover meeting. Reference group members were shown the completed versions of each resource (refer to question in step 3, 'How satisfied are the Agency, Community and Reference group with the resources?'). 4 SOWFI members outside of the reference group who were a part of the interview phase, were contacted to provide further feedback on the final health and wellbeing resource. 3 people provided positive responses with no further feedback for changes. Agency supervisor was shown 3 key sides after the changes suggested by the Board were implemented, they verbally reported satisfaction with the health and wellbeing resource, self-care outline and written satisfaction of the handover meeting with the Board.
To what extent will the medium term and long-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOWFI will be providing the developed resources on the SOWFI website for new and existing members to access.

term outcomes be achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOWFI members verbally voiced regular interactions with other wildlife organisations and said they will be providing information to them after resources are evaluated and finalised. • SOWFI Board will go over each recommendation in detail at their next meeting to look over resources available to achieve the outcomes. • Agency supervisor has joined the membership team to focus on the health and wellbeing of SOWFI members by completing recommendations made by PFs, running the self-care workshop, and evaluating project outcomes. • Member of reference group has also volunteered to run the self-care workshop and assist in the implementation of the ProQOL.
How successful were the project facilitators in utilising a community empowerment approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education about using the resources was delivered and provided to the reference group and Board members. • Feedback was welcomed throughout the project to promote negotiation and decision making through encouragement during FB posts, reference group meetings and Board meetings. • The community participated in providing feedback on resources and engaged more in discussions regarding volunteer health and wellbeing was provided with roles and opportunities such as the ability to interact with PFs through interviews, trialling the self-care (ProQOL) tool and being asked for feedback on resources before finalising. • The community participated and engaged in discussions regarding volunteer health and wellbeing by interacting with PFs through interviews, informal discussions and on FB posts. • Reference group members were encouraged to participate in decision-making during the action plan and implementation and were involved in the development of the finished versions of the resources. A Member of the reference group took on further roles such as running the self-care workshop and overseeing the implementation of the ProQOL. • The self-care workshop was presented as an outline for the presenters to finalise to suit their presenting style. • Findings from the needs analysis were provided to the agency to highlight areas where wildlife volunteers require further support.
Summary:	<p>Relevant information and resources were distributed to the community and refinements of the resources were made after feedback was provided. Further evaluation was carried out to affirm the satisfaction of the final resources. Reference group and Board were introduced to the needs of the SOWFI community and were involved in problem solving and decision making to promote community empowerment.</p>

Step 5. Dissemination (week 9): Providing information to all relevant stakeholders regarding the project's findings, outcomes, and future directions.	
Key Evaluation Questions	Results
To what extent was information disseminated to all relevant stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed resources emailed to the Board Chairperson to edit before disseminating to SOWFI members. • Emailed handover of resources and recommendations to the agency supervisor and the Board Chairperson. • Handover of recommendations and future directions were presented to the SOWFI Board through a Teams meeting. • Outcomes of the project disseminated to all SOWFI members through a post on the private SOWFI FB group.
To what extent has information of the project's current state been provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posted the project progress report on the private SOWFI FB page for all relevant stakeholders to see the outcomes of the project and future directions every week. • Attended 2 Board meetings. Presented all the developed resources. Participated in discussions on how they would be implemented to the SOWFI community. Summarised completed resources. Discussed further recommendations.
How accessible are the resources provided throughout the dissemination process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All resources mentioned in table 3 were handed over to the Chairperson at the beginning of week 9 to action further dissemination. • The health and wellbeing resource will be edited to match the theme of other SOWFI resources and will be added onto the Volunteer tab on the SOWFI website. It will also be given as a physical copy at training workshops and orientation. • The mindfulness activity handout will be added onto the SOWFI website and be handed out as a physical copy. It was also posted on the private SOWFI FB group for all members to access (9 likes, 39 views out of 57). • The 3 key slides will be given to the species coordinator to integrate them into the training PowerPoints. It was also posted on the private SOWFI FB group for all members to see (43 views out of 57, 7 likes, 1 comment). • Discussed handover details with the Board. Membership Officer suggested writing a summary to briefly discuss the project and also highlight where each resource can be accessed. Summary will be a part of a new member's volunteer handbook.
To what extent has information about future directions of the project been provided to the Agency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a summary of the resources to the membership officer for new volunteers to access in their volunteer handbook. • The extent of information about future directions of the project has been provided through the recommendations section of the report, which has been provided to the Board Chairperson and agency supervisor to distribute to Board members. • Board members proposed looking at the recommendation table in more depth in the next Board meeting to start implementing strategies to achieve the identified outcomes and inform future directions of the project.
Summary:	All resources were provided to the Chairperson to distribute to other SOWFI members. A summary was created to highlight where these resources can be accessed. Recommendations of the project were discussed at the Board meeting to support the sustainability of the project. The Board agreed to having a more in depth look at all the recommendations in their next meeting.

DISCUSSION

PROJECT PROCESS

As discussed in 'Approaches', a Community Empowerment approach was utilised to increase the knowledge and confidence of SOWFI and its members. This was achieved by highlighting the issues, involving the community through problem solving and decision making, and developing an outline for future action (Talbot & Verrinder 2014). The empowerment of community members can achieve effective results as they have expertise over their lives, their roles, and the issues they experience (Talbot & Verrinder 2014). This approach was also influenced by the principle of client-centred practice and the PEO, which assisted PFs in considering all aspects of a volunteer's life during the needs analysis and the development of the resource (Cooper et al. 1999; Sumsion 2000).

For a PF to be effective in facilitating community control of decision making, they must listen and learn intently from members of the community to ensure that the information gathered, and the conclusions made are relevant to the community (Talbot & Verrinder 2014). Most of the SOWFI members that provided their felt needs participated in interview questions that explored what wildlife volunteering meant to them; the physical, social, and emotional experiences they have had as a volunteer; how much support they feel they are getting from SOWFI; and what further support they think they need. By asking questions that considered all aspects of a wildlife volunteer's role, participants were encouraged to discuss many experiences in detail through stories, thoughts, and opinions. These discussions increased the PF's understanding of the SOWFI community and the support they require to continue to care for and rescue wildlife.

A reference group consisting of SOWFI members that participated in the interviews during the needs analysis was formed to assist PFs in prioritising a need, creating an action plan, and developing a resource. Members of the reference group were chosen so that each wildlife volunteer role was represented (carer, rescuer, TL, Board member). Community control of decision making allows a community to build confidence in being in control over their own affairs and utilising their knowledge and expertise (Talbot & Verrinder 2014).

Through the processes of meaningful participation, members of a community can gain a sense of confidence in their ability to work for change (Talbot & Verrinder 2014). Members of the reference group were briefly presented with the 6 most frequently mentioned needs and were asked to vote between the 2 most important needs identified by the PFs, to ensure that the direction of the project would be relevant to the SOWFI community and to give the reference group control in the decision regarding the project's direction. By briefly showing the other 4 needs, this also opened the option for members of the reference group to object to the 2 needs identified if they felt there was a more important need.

During the action planning and implementation, the reference group was involved in the discussions regarding the direction of the resources and were consulted before any resources were finalised. This collaborative approach gave the members of the reference group an opportunity to practice problem solving regarding the needs of the SOWFI community and assisted in identifying members of the reference group that wanted to take on further roles after the end of the 9-week project. The

confidence and improved skills developed through such processes assist in increasing a community's ability to effectively enable change (Talbot & Verrinder 2014).

The purpose of the first Board meeting in week 7 was to present all the resources that had been developed to gain approval from the Board, receive any suggestions and feedback, and give the Board time to familiarise themselves with the resources before they were officially handed over for dissemination to the SOWFI community. The purpose of the second meeting in week 9 was to go over the handover by discussing the recommendations for SOWFI from the information collated from the literature, other wildlife organisations and members of the SOWFI community. This aligns with the principles of community empowerment as community members need to understand the process and desired outcomes of the project to ensure sustainability and community participation (Talbot & Verrinder 2014).

KEY FINDINGS

The mind map provides a visual representation of issues that SOWFI members feel affected by (Appendix C). The 2 key needs that were consistently addressed throughout the needs analysis process were:

- Increased knowledge of health risks that wildlife volunteers may experience
- Further development of the team system.

Resources to identify health risks wildlife volunteers experience

Wildlife volunteers may experience significant effects on their health due to numerous responsibilities and multiple stressors that could lead to BO and CF (Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). It was identified during the scoping phase and needs analysis that there was a lack of resources to support wildlife volunteers in identifying and managing health risks such as CF, BO and trauma. It was acknowledged that members who were introduced to wildlife volunteering were unaware of the health risks that may have been associated with wildlife volunteering.

The literature discusses the importance of increasing knowledge and awareness of health risks such as BO and CF in preventing and managing them (Cheng 2005; Lloyd & Campion 2017). This was evidenced by members who were aware of the early signs and symptoms of health risks (such as CF and BO) through other roles and reported being able to utilise their own coping strategies to mitigate these health risks. This also further showed the importance of implementing supports for wildlife volunteers, as these members had to make use of the support provided through other roles.

Identifying and addressing coping strategies, self-care strategies, and exploring possible contributing risk factors is also discussed through literature as important as it allows volunteers to protect themselves, enhances volunteer wellbeing, and provides a clearer way to manage their health (Lloyd & Campion 2017; White et al. 2021; Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017). SOWFI members that discussed experiencing health risks such as CF and BO through wildlife volunteering reported not knowing the early signs and symptoms and not having coping strategies.

Findings from the felt needs show that CF, BO, and trauma are health risks that wildlife volunteers do experience. Findings also indicated that considerable importance should be placed on ensuring that wildlife volunteers know about the signs and symptoms of these health risks, so they can

prevent and manage them before their lives are negatively affected (Adimando 2018; Ekstedt & Fagerber 2005).

Members who have experienced these health risks also identified that talking to other members who understand their position is another effective coping strategy that assists in managing and preventing them.

Team Systems

Through interviews, TL voiced they would like more structural support to support team members when there is an issue that needs to be addressed and would like to learn how to interact with their members more effectively. TLs also identified that they wanted to know when their team members had participated in a rescue or release so they could initiate a debrief, as these are the tasks where the most distressing situations occur. The impact of stressors such as euthanasia and distressing animal deaths during rescues are identified as risk factors towards the development of CF and trauma (Levitt & Gezinski 2020; Lloyd & Champion 2017; Moir & Van den Brunk 2020).

Team members expressed that they would like more opportunities to meet with other members of their team and other members of SOWFI so they can build relationships and create support systems. Literature supports these findings as connecting with others and having supportive discussions within a team is said to minimise the likelihood of CF (Moir & Van den Brunk 2020). The implementation of this structure would assist in building a supportive environment within the community providing SOWFI members with more control over the supports they can utilise, further promoting community empowerment (Christens 2012).

Team members also expressed that they would have liked more support as a new rescuer and feel that the first couple of rescues can be quite stressful because of factors such as not knowing exactly what to do and being exposed to potentially distressing situations alone. Support at the beginning of their role can psychologically prepare volunteers for the realities and expectations of the role and reduce the rate of turnover (Levitt & Gezinski 2020).

These findings show that TLs want to provide more support to the members of their team, and team members want more opportunities to meet and work with other SOWFI members. The literature discusses the importance of having people that volunteers can talk to and share their experiences with (Carleton 2019; Haering 2020; Polachek & Wallace 2018) and most of the wildlife organisations that PFs met with implemented buddy systems for their new volunteers and hosted social events.

STRENGTHS OF THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the project, PFs identified key strengths of SOWFI that promote or support the health and wellbeing of their wildlife volunteers and positively affect the sustainability of the role.

Communication between SOWFI members was reported as effective and consistent by members of the community that were interviewed due to the team system, the 'SOWFI Team Rescue & Rehab' FB group and the availability of Board members, TLs and species Co-ordinators.

Another strength is the supports SOWFI already has in place to support the health and wellbeing of their volunteers, which include the team system, volunteering flexibility, strong policies around no-

bullying, a volunteer subsidy program, and the promotion of Wildtalk (a 24/7 free online counselling for wildlife volunteers). These supports show the health, wellbeing and sustainability of their wildlife volunteers are important issues to SOWFI, as they wish to support their volunteers as efficiently as possible and maintain their number of volunteers so they can continue to care for native wildlife.

The SOWFI Board was very co-operative throughout the project and provided PFs with the opportunity to attend all the training and social events. The SOWFI Board was also very receptive to the findings of the literature review made during the scoping phase and engaged in discussion about what was found and what they plan to do with the information. Findings from the needs analysis was a topic in a TL meeting which resulted in a discussion regarding the team system and ways to improve it. An idea that was developed in the reference group and commenced by the Board was the addition of more structured team building activities at social events to ensure the effectiveness of these events in initiating and strengthening relationships between SOWFI members.

CHALLENGES

One of the main barriers that PFs faced was running the community project without a physical site location which impacted our ability to build rapport with the larger community. As most volunteers worked in a full-time role, PFs had to be flexible with the time that the volunteers were available to engage with the project. PFs made the best of this challenge by interacting with SOWFI members through FB, where meetings face-face, over the phone, and through Zoom meetings were arranged. PFs stayed in contact with the reference group during the action plan and implementation stage through scheduled weekly Zoom meetings. PFs pursued tips and support from the advertising committee and agency supervisor to provide relevant communication and engagement to the community. PFs attended events that SOWFI has already organised including the Park Lands Project, the SOWFI Annual Picnic and training workshops to meet with SOWFI members. As a result, PFs were able to meet and engage with the community to develop project outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to the extent that a project can continue after the PFs leave (Wandersman et al. 2000). Key elements to ensure a project is sustainable include identifying and teaching multiple members that will be able to take over the project, maintaining the positive outcomes that the project has achieved and ensuring that it meets the agency's needs (Wandersman et al. 2000).

The community empowerment approach that was utilised throughout the project assisted in identifying members that would assist in further developing the project. A member of the reference group was identified due to the interest they showed in the project and the development of future resources. This member was involved in discussions throughout the action plan and implementation and had many opportunities to develop their ability to problem solve and make decisions. This member and the agency supervisor formed a team within the SOWFI membership team to focus on completing the recommendations provided by PFs, evaluating the effectiveness of the resources developed throughout the project, and achieving the long-term outcomes of the project. The goals of community empowerment are to improve community participation, increasing local leadership

and increasing community control over program planning and management (Talbot & Verrinder 2014). The formation of this team addresses all these goals, which shows that the community empowerment approach utilised throughout the project was an appropriate choice that assisted in the structural change of the agency and the development of sustainability.

The health and wellbeing resource that was developed will be accessible in different formats online and as a physical copy, and the key points of the resource will be integrated into all training workshops and orientations. This will ensure that all SOWFI members can interact with the resource and that the information developed will be disseminated to the community. A crucial part of project sustainability is ensuring members have awareness and full accessibility to the resources that have been developed. Therefore, a summary of all the resources and where they can be accessed has been provided for SOWFI to distribute when they disseminate the resources to the community. SOWFI has shown that this need is a priority through their interest in this project, the supports already in place to support volunteer health and wellbeing, the implementations they have already made from the needs analysis findings, and their plans to go over the recommendations at the next Board meeting.

An essential step of project sustainability is providing effective handover and recommendations for SOWFI to continue the next steps of the project. Further recommendations for implementations of how to sustain the resources developed during the 9-week process is presented in the recommendations table priority 1 and 2. Key findings found in the needs analysis that were not prioritised in this project were also provided in the recommendations. Other recommendations to continue promoting the health and wellbeing of wildlife volunteers include further discussion about mental health topics, different learning modalities of resources to increase community access and collaborating with other wildlife organisations with similar values.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH SUSTAINABILITY

The Board identified that further discussions about the recommendations were to be considered around the topics of operational costs, policies, and procedures. The recommended expected duration for outcomes to be achieved might not align with SOWFI's current timeline. An emphasis on flexibility of recommendations was mentioned during the final Board meeting to allow SOWFI to achieve these outcomes while considering SOWFI's current agenda.

KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

The following section represents key project outcomes that were achieved during the 9-week project that aims to work toward the 3 key project outcomes (long-term outcomes).

Community: Sustainability of wildlife volunteers is supported through resources that promote protective factors and manage risk factors

A comprehensive range of resources has been developed in collaboration with SOWFI to identify risk factors, signs and symptoms, protective factors, and coping strategies to address potential health risks such as CF, BO and trauma. Increasing the community's knowledge of existing health risks and their prevention increases their independence in supporting their own health and wellbeing, supporting the sustainability of the role.

Agency: SOWFI has strategies and resources to identify and manage risk factors in present and future wildlife volunteers

SOWFI learned more about the most prevalent health risks associated with wildlife volunteering and their risk factors, signs, and symptoms. They were also provided with tools to assist SOWFI members in independently learning about these health risks and ways to identify them. SOWFI also were inspired to form a team to focus on the development and implementation of further resources to support the health and wellbeing of their wildlife volunteers. This team will have the results from the needs analysis and the recommendations to assist them in creating resources to support the needs of the SOWFI community.

Advocacy: SOWFI presents strategies and resources developed through the project to other wildlife organisations

SOWFI intend to share findings and resources developed throughout the project with other wildlife organisations. SOWFI were notified of the organisations that contributed to the project and have pre-existing relationships with other wildlife organisations that value the health and wellbeing of their volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further recommendations of the project have been identified below to guide the sustainability of the project to help the agency achieve long-term outcomes and promote the continuation of community development within the SOWFI community. The recommendations that the PFs have provided are supported through information and needs collated through literature and the discussions with SOWFI members during the project. Discussions with SOWFI members occurred through interviews and informal discussions at social events. The reference group, a group of SOWFI members with different roles (carer, rescuer, TL, Board member) also assisted in developing the recommendations through the ideas and discussions that came from the meetings in week 5, 6 and 7.

Recommendation		Rationale	Strategies	Outcomes	Short-term outcome (STO): 0-3 months Medium-term outcomes (MTO): 3-6 months Long-term outcomes (LTO): 6-9 months
1	Implement self-care workshop	<p>A Self-care workshop that focuses on self-care, mindfulness, resilience, coping strategies and compassion satisfaction provides the opportunity for SOWFI members to reduce or alleviate symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout symptoms (Adimando 2018).</p> <p>Members of the reference group felt that a face-to-face group workshop would be the best setting to learn activities that cover topics such as mindfulness.</p>	<p>Self-care workshop presenter Kendall, Karen is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning about the information in the self-care outline changing the workshop to suit their style and preference of presenting creating feedback form to gauge effectiveness and enjoyment Creating a pre-recording for SOWFI members who live in rural areas to access <p>SOWFI Board is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising the venue and managing attendance for the workshops Promoting the self-care workshop on the private SOWFI FB group and newsletters 	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run a trial of the self-care workshop to provide the opportunity to learn about self-care and coping strategies in a comfortable group setting - Evaluate effectiveness through engagement in activities and feedback form <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of further self-care workshops - SOWFI members develop a further understanding and appreciation of self-care and coping strategies -Evaluate through attendance and interest in workshops <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online video version is created and utilised by SOWFI members - Effectiveness and participation can be gauged by an online feedback form 	

2	Modification and Implementation of the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) tool	<p>Members of the reference group identified that they would appreciate having the ability to self-assess their feelings in relation to health risks so they can better understand the support they require.</p> <p>The ProQOL can be used to prevent and identify symptoms of compassion fatigue, burnout, and trauma (Stamm 2010). The ProQOL is accessible for members to monitor their own symptoms which can be used to receive recommendations, strategies for self-care and stress management techniques (Adimando 2018).</p>	<p>Kendall to adapt the ProQOL so that it is more relevant to wildlife volunteers.</p> <p>SOWFI Board is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of the ProQOL to SOWFI members • Evaluating the effectiveness and accessibility of the ProQOL through a survey <p>TLs are responsible for learning about the ProQOL manual and teaching team members how to utilise it effectively.</p>	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All SOWFI members are aware of the ProQOL tool - TLs to gauge their team's knowledge of the tool through formal and informal discussion <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOWFI members begin to understand how to use the ProQOL tool and have an increased understanding of the main health issues affecting wildlife volunteers - Confidence in using the ProQOL tool can be gauged through a survey <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOWFI members know how to effectively utilise the ProQOL to identify how they are feeling - Confidence and ability to use ProQOL can be identified through formal and informal discussion between members and TLs and a survey
3	Formation of a group that discusses volunteer health topics and reviews the effectiveness of strategies that support volunteers	<p>The Reference group provided an opportunity for the members to think about ways to improve support around volunteer health and wellbeing. This resulted in many ideas that were implemented during the project. The formation of a similar group will provide further opportunities to discuss this topic in relation to the SOWFI community and create a way to review the effectiveness of the resources created in the project.</p>	<p>(SOWFI Board and Karen) to find interested members of the reference group and other SOWFI members to form the group and decide the frequency of meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a group that consists of people with different roles within SOWFI that discusses topics regarding health and wellbeing support for SOWFI members and reviews the current support in place. • Focus on needs of general SOWFI members. 	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group is formed and meeting details are confirmed - SOWFI members learn more about the group and its purpose <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness of project resources are reviewed through informal and formal feedback (surveys) <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of further interventions that address promoting and supporting volunteer health and wellbeing

4	Further develop the main resource into an online or physical workshop	<p>A workshop provides more options for SOWFI members to interact with the information developed in the main resource.</p> <p>During discussions with SOWFI members, they all had very different preferred methods of learning. Therefore, both the PFs and the reference group agreed that more options to learn would suit the SOWFI community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unisa (PCP)/Flinders Transition to Professional Practice Project (TPP) /SOWFI member/Health and wellbeing group (recommendation 3) to develop the main resource into a physical or online format. Make each slide more concise so the information is digestible as a presentation <p>If online, break down the workshop into sections so it is more easily accessible and absorbable</p>	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person in charge of development of the workshop is identified <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource is developed into a completed workshop <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop is implemented for SOWFI members
5	Provide social opportunities within teams	<p>Team members voiced they would like more opportunities to socialise with their team to learn about each other's roles and receive more support within the team. Having the opportunity to socialise with people within a team helps build connectedness and trust, which in turn makes people more approachable, and have someone to talk to if they have any concerns.</p>	<p>TLs will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing more opportunities for team members to meet (online or physical) Conducting team meetings at a physical location so members have the opportunity to meet with each other face-to-face 	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members learn about each other's roles within the team <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members have the opportunity to get to know each other in person <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members express that they are satisfied with communication within their team through formal and informal discussion

6	Provide opportunities for a debrief (e.g., after rescues, releases or death of an animal)	Debriefing is one of the team preventative strategies for compassion fatigue, burnout and trauma. Debriefing provides opportunities for TLs to learn how to effectively communicate with their team members and support members in preventing health risks. In addition, debriefing amongst peers has also been considered an effective way of managing compassion fatigue (White et al. 2021). White et al. (2021) suggests training is required to gain an understanding of the concept of low-impact debriefing and its benefits for it to be effective.	<p>TLs are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing follow up support after every significant event • Asking members their preferred method of contact • Scheduling contact with individual team members once every 1-2 months individually and/or as a team to check how everything is going <p>SOWFI Board is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring further debrief training for TLs <p>Creating a system to assist TLs in knowing when to debrief a member</p>	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TLs learn how to support their team members and how to conduct debriefs <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TLs consistently provide opportunities for debriefing sessions after significant events (e.g., releases, euthanasia) - Assessed through the frequency of debriefs recorded by TLs <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TLs consistently provide opportunities for debriefing sessions for their team members for general check-ups and after significant events (releases, euthanasia) - Assessed through the frequency of debriefs recorded by TLs
7	Implement more support for new rescuers	<p>A study from Levitt & Gezinski (2020) suggests that support at the beginning of their role can psychologically prepare volunteers for the realities/expectations of the role and reduce the rate of turnover.</p> <p>Providing more support for new volunteers is a preventative health strategy for compassion fatigue, burnout and trauma.</p>	<p>SOWFI Board is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the option for new rescuers to attend rescues with experienced SOWFI members • Arranging a buddy for new wildlife rescuers <p>TLs are responsible for:</p> <p>Preparing volunteers for a possible critical wildlife animal rescue as part of the preventative strategy for trauma</p>	<p>STO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOWFI members gain more confidence in going on rescues by themselves - Gauged through formal and informal discussion <p>MTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New SOWFI members understand their role and feel confident going on rescues independently - Gauged through formal and informal discussion and survey to review support provided by buddy system <p>LTO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New SOWFI members can experience the more distressing realities of wildlife rescue in an environment where they are provided support by the SOWFI member they are with - Assessed through interviews/surveys with members

8	Provide more opportunities for community/social events	Volunteer members expressed an interest in getting to know more SOWFI members during the needs analysis. Facilitating strong relationships between members through team-building activities would likely facilitate strong relationships and improve connections (Levitt & Gezinski 2020).	SOWFI Board is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising more social opportunities for SOWFI members Including more Icebreakers and team-building activities during social events 	STO: - SOWFI members have more opportunities to meet other members in the SOWFI community MTO: - SOWFI members learn more about other members of the SOWFI community LTO: - SOWFI members feel more comfortable reaching out to each other - Assessed by observations of SOWFI Board about community relations
9	SOWFI shares resources with other wildlife organisations	SOWFI collaborates with other wildlife organisations when further assistance is required for rescuing and caring for wildlife animals. As a result, it is important for other wildlife organisations to have resources to look after their volunteer's health and wellbeing to support wildlife animals together.	SOWFI Board is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacting wildlife organisations that assisted in the project (Adelaide Koala and Wildlife Centre, Wires and Wildcare) with outcomes of the project Learning about other organisations that are interested in wildlife volunteer health and wellbeing Sharing resources that promote health and wellbeing with other wildlife organisations 	STO: - SOWFI have a clear outline of future resources to develop MTO: - SOWFI identifies resources to share with other wildlife organisations LTO: - SOWFI presents strategies and resources developed through the project to other wildlife organisations

CONCLUSION

Volunteer health and wellbeing was identified as a need important both to the SOWFI Board and to the SOWFI community, and it was found that although most members were aware of health risks such as CF, BO and trauma, they had limited knowledge regarding their signs and symptoms. A community empowerment approach was implemented throughout this project to increase the knowledge and confidence of SOWFI and its volunteers regarding these health risks. By providing resources that increased the knowledge of the health risks and how they are managed and prevented, the members of the community were given the ability to reduce the effect of these health risks on their volunteering roles and other aspects of their life. PFs highlighted the issue; explained how to utilise the resources; and developed an outline to provide SOWFI with the knowledge and direction to continue the project and further support the health and wellbeing of their wildlife volunteers.

The sustainability of the resources was supported by providing multiple resources with different types of learning modalities. The main challenge associated with sustainability will be the amount of people and resources SOWFI will be able to allocate towards focusing on the recommendations, which will be further explored in their next Board meeting. The sustainability of the project will be supported by SOWFI's efficient communication methods, the priority they have on this topic, and the newly developed wellbeing team that will oversee the completion of the outcomes identified in the recommendations and review the effectiveness of the resources developed.

Sustainability of the project will ensure that SOWFI will continue to develop their knowledge of the health risks that their volunteers face and further improve their ability to support the health and wellbeing of their wildlife volunteers.

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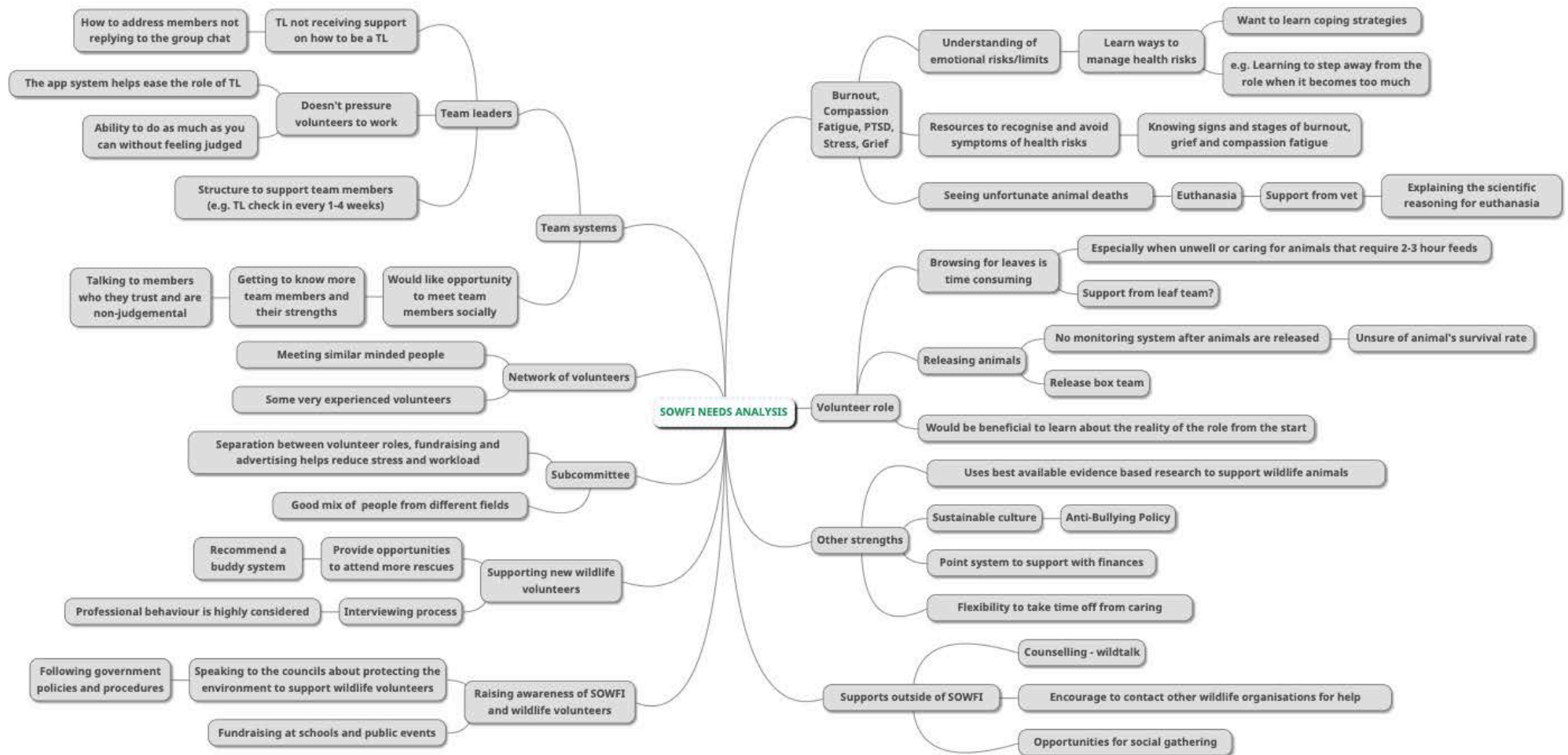
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

- Can you tell us about your role in SOWFI?
- What do you feel is the most time consuming aspect of being a wildlife carer?
- How long have you volunteered for SOWFI (and other organisations)?
- How many hours a week do you think you spend volunteering for SOWFI? And is this how much you want to spend a week? (too much/not enough) What is your occupation?
- What area are you located in?
- Why did you first decide to become a volunteer? What are the main reasons that you continue to volunteer?
- What are the benefits of becoming a volunteer? What are the benefits of joining SOWFI (compared to other volunteer organisations)? What do you feel is the best aspect of this role?
- Are you a team leader or a part of a team? Who is your team leader? How often do you communicate with other members of team/team leader?
- Are there any other members of SOWFI you communicate with often? If so, how did that connection form?
- What do you feel are the most difficult aspects of what you do in this role?
- What do you think are the risks of becoming a volunteer wildlife carer/rescuer?
- What has your experience been with animals passing away (before rescue/during rescue/during care/after care) and what do you think affects the way you feel about this?
- What do you know about compassion fatigue and burnout?
- Do you feel you have ever experienced either of these?
- If so, how did you address the feelings at the time?
- If not, how do you normally cope with sadness/stress?
- To what extent does SOWFI support their volunteers?
- What supports do you know of that SOWFI currently provides?
- What type of supports do you currently access from SOWFI?
- What supports do you find (the most) helpful and why?
- Do you receive support from anywhere else (example - from other organisations or websites)?
- What other areas of support do you feel would be helpful in supporting your volunteering role? How would these extra supports help you?
- (If they have been in other organisations) are there noticeable differences between the support you have received within SOWFI when compared to previous organisations you have been with?
- What are you expecting to see from this project?
- What outcomes are you expecting from this project?
- Are you interested in being further involved in the project? This would involve either being a part of the reference group or being a part of trialling the intervention once it is designed.
- What is your preferred style of engaging with new information or resources?
- Do you have any questions for us? Feel free to contact us if you have any further information you would like to provide or if you want to be more involved in the project.



Appendix C: Mind map of the Needs Analysis



Appendix D: Health and Wellbeing Resource

Caring for Carers Resource: Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Wildlife Volunteers

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc (SOWFI)

Created by Joshua Kefauver and Ngan Van



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- Risk factors for health and wellbeing
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Introduction

Wildlife volunteers experience many positive emotions while working with animals, these include self-compassion, compassion satisfaction and happiness (Polachek & Wallace 2018).

Although there are many benefits to wildlife volunteering, strong commitment and emotional attachment can lead many wildlife volunteers to put their personal wellbeing at risk (Young, White & Chivers 2017). In addition, the stress from caring and the exposure to distressing situations during rescues can lead to compassion fatigue, burnout and trauma, which if not properly managed can affect emotional and physical health (White et al. 2021).

Caregivers must be aware of the risk factors, signs, symptoms and management strategies of these health risks so they can address them early and reduce the impact it may have on their lives (Adimando 2018).



Risk Factors of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Trauma in Wildlife Volunteers

- Experiencing a distressing situation when rescuing an animal
- Taking an animal to get euthanized
- Having an animal in care pass away
- Looking after more animals/spending more time volunteering than you can handle
- Not adapting volunteering schedule when other aspects of life get overwhelming
- Not utilising social and emotional supports

What is Compassion Fatigue (CF)?

Compassion fatigue is defined as "a state of exhaustion and dysfunction - biologically, psychologically, and socially - as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress and all that it evokes" (Figley 1995, p. 253).

Compassion fatigue is the result of being exposed to highly distressing situations such as high animal death rates and euthanasia.

Compassion fatigue can lead to a declined level of care and compassion due to increased stress, feelings of confusion and helplessness (Carr 2019).

It is important to identify compassion fatigue early so that it can be addressed, signs and symptoms of CF include:

- Absenteeism or procrastination (engaging in activities when unwell or at an abnormally low level)
- Decrease in effectiveness and quality of work
- Mood swings
- Excessive complaining
- Emotional numbness
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Distancing and isolating self from others
- Anger
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Guilt
- Sleep disturbances
- Concentration problems
- Fatigue

(Adimando 2018, Enns, Lohman & Strandberg 2007, Levitt & Gosselin 2020, Lloyd & Cripps 2017)
"Early signs and symptoms" (Ekstedt & Fagerberg 2005, Enns, Lohman & Strandberg 2007)

What is Burnout?

Burnout occurs when exposed to constant emotional pressure and excessive workload and is a gradual development initiated by long-term emotional exhaustion (Carr 2019).

Burnout is defined as feelings of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficiency (Maslach 2003).

A study that explored the feelings of people who experienced burnout stated that "the intense focus on their duties made them blind and deaf to influences or warning signs from their bodies, their colleagues or family (and) sometimes their ill-being was obvious, even to a complete stranger" (Ekstedt & Fagerberg 2005, p. 63).

It is important to recognise the early signs of burnout to assist in preventing it before it can further develop (Ekstedt & Fagerberg 2005).

Signs and Symptoms:

- Absenteeism
- Decrease in effectiveness and quality of work
- Emotional exhaustion
- A reduced sense of personal accomplishment
- Cynicism (a negative outlook and perspective)
- Inefficiency (reduced capability)
- Persistent fatigue
- Feeling trapped
- Reduced self-care
- Social withdrawal
- Increased passiveness (overly compliant, low initiative)
- Headaches
- Muscular pain
- Fever

(Carr 2019, Ekstedt & Fagerberg 2005, Lloyd & Cripps 2017)
"Early signs and symptoms" (Ekstedt & Fagerberg 2005, Enns, Lohman & Strandberg 2007)

What is Trauma?

Direct trauma (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined by Seides (2010, p. 725) as "an anxiety disorder that develops from events that are interpreted as traumatic". The term direct trauma is used when someone experiences or witnesses a distressing situation that negatively affects them (Moir & Van den Brink 2020).

Signs and Symptoms:

- Recurrent thoughts
- Nightmares
- Feelings (intrusion)
- Avoidance of emotions
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Avoidance symptoms such as dissociation
- Negative cognitions
- Hyperarousal symptoms such as anxiety and hypervigilance

(Bennett & Rohlf, 2005, Friedman et al. 2011, Moir & Van den Brink 2020, Scutney 2017)

What is Trauma?

Secondary traumatic stress (STS)

The reaction that caregivers experience as a result of long term-exposure to and caring for victims of trauma, where the only difference to PTSD is direct exposure to the original trauma (Andriukonis, Hull & Prottopova 2020).

Signs and Symptoms:

- Fear
- Sleep difficulties
- Intrusive images
- Avoiding reminders of traumatic experience

Wildlife volunteers are susceptible to both direct trauma and secondary trauma from situations such as: seeing distressing animal deaths, having to care for animals in unfortunate situations and having animals pass away while in care.

Preventative Strategies

Individual Preventative Strategies

Self-care

Self-care strategies protect ourselves from the negative effects of empathic engagement that causes compassion fatigue (White et al. 2021).

Relaxation techniques and other forms of self care have been shown to have a significant beneficial effect on PTSD and stress (Adimando 2018; Ofel-Dodoo et al. 2020).



Examples of self-care strategies

- Relaxation - Taking a "time out"
- Recreational activities
- Journaling
- Proactive activities
- Lifestyle changes
 - Eating healthy
 - Exercising more - e.g. going for a hike
 - Learn relaxation techniques - e.g. meditation or yoga
 - Reduction of working hours
 - Ensuring adequate sleep

Mindfulness



Mindfulness

'Mindfulness is associated with positive psychological strengths such as emotional intelligence, the ability to cope with failure, as well as improving relationship functioning, help-seeking behaviour and self-care' (Neff 2004; Neff & Germer 2013; Neff et al. 2018; Krangeloh et al. 2019 cited in Moir & Van den Brink 2020, p. 7).

Mindfulness self-compassion

Learning to be more compassionate towards ourselves allows us to utilise coping strategies that help us adapt when confronted with a stressful situation (Lloyd & Campion 2017).

Lloyd & Campion (2017, p. 5) state that 'The aim is to be able to identify the source of the stressor and have the ability to accept the emotions that are connected to it, whether they are positive or negative'.

Example of a mindfulness activity: Observing leaf mindfulness



This exercise requires a leaf and your attention.

- Pick up a leaf and hold it in your hand.
- Give it your full attention for five minutes.
- Notice the colors, the shape, the texture, and the patterns.

This will bring you into the present and align your thoughts with your current experience.

Self-compassion break:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1VJgCj1uo&ab_channel=Mindfulness

Resilience



Resilience building

Wildlife volunteering can be a potentially stressful role, therefore an individual who is resilient will be able to adaptively cope in stressful situations (Lloyd & Campion 2017). Building resilience counteracts the effects of "over engagement" in distressing or difficult situations (White et al. 2021).

Personal qualities or traits of resilience:

- Optimism
- Self-confidence
- Level-headedness
- Hardiness
- Having the ability to be resourceful during times of adversity

Skills & strategies to promote characteristics of resilience:

- Improving connections between colleagues
- Mutual support in a group environment
- Adopting healthy self-care strategies
- Being aware of personal and environmental triggers that could exacerbate compassion fatigue and burnout
- Encourage discussion around positive aspects of wellbeing as part of the culture within the organisation
- Engaging in educational resilience-building activities
 - Perform acts of kindness
 - Engage in reflection
 - Practice gratitude
 - Participate in mindfulness

(Lloyd & Campion 2017; Moir & Van den Brink 2020; White et al. 2021; Yang, Wang & Chien 2017)

Team Preventative Strategies

Team Environment

Improving connections and facilitating strong relationships between team members acts as a good support mechanism. This can be achieved through:

- Promoting good communication skills among team members and team leaders
 - Encourage conversations at team meetings
 - Increase involvement in decision making (Cheng 2005)
- Connecting with each other
 - Participate in team-building activities
 - Provide opportunities for team members to meet face-to-face

Debrief

- Provide opportunities to debrief with team leaders and peers individually or as a group
- Participate in debriefing session after an emotionally stressful encounter such as euthanasia (Lloyd & Campion 2017)
- Engage in low-impact debriefing by utilising self-awareness, fair warning, consent, and limited disclosure to give the listener time to prepare (Madieu 2012)



(Levitt & Geronzi 2020; Lloyd & Campion 2017; Moir & Van den Brink 2020; White et al. 2021)

Organisational Preventative Strategies

- Create a culture where discussions about positive aspects of wellbeing are encouraged and discussed.
- Engage in positive activities such as community outreach and public education.
- Celebrate successes as a group during team meetings, on social media or through the newsletter.

Provide opportunities for ongoing learning, education, knowledge, resource, training, workshops such as:

- Peer debriefing strategies and support programs
- Wellbeing training on topics including:
 - Stress management
 - Resilience-building
 - Compassion fatigue
 - Mindfulness
 - Life balance



(Cheng 2005; Levitt & Geronzi 2020; Lloyd & Campion 2017; Moir & Van den Brink 2020; White et al. 2021)

Professional Quality of Life Measure

Identify individuals at risk using the Professional Quality of Life Measure (ProQOL). <https://proqol.org/>

"The ProQOL is the most commonly used measure of the negative and positive effects of helping others who experience suffering and trauma. The ProQOL has sub-scales for compassion satisfaction, burnout and compassion fatigue." (The Center for Victims of Torture 2019).

Access the concise manual for the ProQOL scale by Stamm (2010) to learn how to effectively use the ProQOL. <https://proqol.org/proqol-manual>

The scale can be used to self-monitor satisfaction and a prompt for self-care.



(The Center for Victims of Torture 2019)

Coping Strategies



Self care and mindfulness - can be used as a preventative strategy and a coping strategy

Positive reappraisal - look for the positive meanings behind a negative event (Pavani et al. 2016). For example, think about the quality of life of an injured animal if released back into the wild. euthanasia offers a way to end a wildlife animal's pain and suffering.

Actively avoid ruminations - Which is the repetitive generation of thoughts about negative events and feelings (Pavani et al. 2016). Engage in activities that you enjoy as this is an effective way to create more neutral or positive thoughts (Lyubomirsky et al. 1999).

Seeking emotional support - seek help, advice, comfort, and support from family, friends, professionals and other volunteers (Allen & Leary 2010).

Problem focused coping

1. Identify the most stressful aspects of the volunteer role
2. Break it down into smaller tasks
3. Identify the most stressful aspects of the volunteer role or what can be changed to make things easier
4. Alter the situation itself or establish an action plan to change them to make them more manageable

For example, reducing the amount of animals in care or caring for older animals that require less time.

(Pavani et al. 2016)

Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is one's ability to find happiness in their work (Lloyd & Campion 2017).

The gratification one gets from their work from:

- Helping animals in need of care
 - Being productive and aware of their meaningful contribution to the community
 - Having a sense of personal fulfilment and purpose in all that the job entails
 - Achieving personal and work-related goals
 - Interacting with the companion animals in their care
- (Levin & Geziński 2020; Moir & Van den Brink 2020)

Providing care for animals may be a protective factor against developing compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress (Andronakis, Hall & Protopopova 2020).



Moir 2014, Family of Canines
Roughly Posing

Additional Resources

Resources for Self-care

- Self-care: <https://twogreenthreads.org/a-self-care-resource-for-wildlife-volunteers/>
- Podcasts for Wildlife Volunteers:
<https://twogreenthreads.org/wildlife-heroes-caring-for-carers-podcast/>
- Building resilience: <https://twogreenthreads.org/take-care-to-give-care/>
- Learn how to meditate (2 min video): <https://youtu.be/tpoxYKJEWfc>
- Understanding and coming to terms with psychological trauma:
<https://www.phocsaaustralia.org/recovery/recovery-online/>
- Tips for Falling Asleep: <https://youtu.be/PuTt4DhFDY>
- Mental health help & support: <https://twogreenthreads.org/mental-health-help-and-support/>
- Bushfire recovery:
<https://twogreenthreads.org/bushfire-recovery-resources-to-help-our-community/>

Mental Health Helplines

- Lifeline | 13 11 14
- Wildtalk | 1300 307 111 | <https://wildtalk.org.au/>
 - Counselling service to provide mental health assistance for wildlife volunteers
- Beyond Blue | 1300 224 636
- MensLine Australia | 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service | 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline | 1800 551 800
- Headspace | 1800 650 890
- QLife | 1800 184 527
- Relationships Australia | 1300 364 277
- ReachOut Australia | <https://au.reachout.com/>

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Appendix E: Caring for Carers Resource

Self-care and Coping Strategies

Caring for Carers Resource:
Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Wildlife Volunteers

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc (SOWFI)

Created by Joshua Kellner and Ngan Yan

SOWFI
SAVE OUR WILDLIFE FOUNDATION INC.

University of South Australia

Session Outline

- Ice Breaker
- Discuss Self-care activities
- Discuss Mindfulness and Mindful activities
- Engage in a Mindful activity as a group
- Discuss Resilience
- Engage in a Resilience activity
- Introduce different Coping Strategies
- Discuss Compassion Satisfaction
- Finish the session with a group activity revolving around Compassion Satisfaction



Ice Breaker

Introduction

Wildlife volunteers experience many positive emotions while working with animals, these include self-compassion, compassion satisfaction and happiness (Polachek & Wallace 2018).

Although there are many benefits to wildlife volunteering, strong commitment and emotional attachment can lead many wildlife volunteers to put their personal wellbeing at risk (Yeung, White & Chilvers 2017).

Wildlife volunteers must be knowledgeable of the risk factors and management strategies of these health risks to effectively decrease their incidence and negative impact (Adimando 2018).



Risk Factors of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Trauma in Wildlife Volunteers

- Experiencing a distressing situation when rescuing an animal
- Taking an animal to get euthanized
- Having an animal in care pass away
- Looking after more animals/spending more time volunteering than you can handle
- Not adapting volunteering schedule when other aspects of life get overwhelming
- Not utilising social and emotional supports

Self-care

Self-care refers to activities individuals undertake to promote their own health, prevent their own diseases, limit their own illnesses and restore their own health (Levin & Idler 1983).



Examples of Self-care

- Relaxation - Taking a "time out"
- Recreational activities
- Journaling
- Proactive activities
- Lifestyle changes
 - Eating healthy
 - Exercising more - e.g. going for a hike
 - Learn relaxation techniques - e.g. meditation or yoga
 - Reduction of working hours
 - Ensuring adequate sleep

Wellness Wheel

Assign each area a number from 1-10

Identify:

- What areas of your life are going well
- What your primary wellness needs are
- Areas of your life that you would like to improve in

Choose 1 or 2 areas to focus on



Relaxation Techniques

Mindful Meditation

During meditation, participants are to bring their attention back to their breath, despite the natural tendency of the mind to wander or to focus on specific thoughts. As with any other skill, the amount of time spent on practicing redirecting one's attention back to their breath should improve its effectiveness (Lacaille et al. 2018).



Learn how to meditate: <https://youtu.be/rqoxYKtEWEc>

Sleep

Sleep strategies

- Stick to the same sleep schedule with a fixed wake up time
- When changing your sleep schedule do it gradually in half an hour or hourly increments
- Prioritise sleep
- Disconnect from electronic devices half an hour before bed
- Try to avoid laying in bed when not trying to sleep so it is more associated with sleep

Tips for Falling Asleep: <https://youtu.be/FuITaDhEtDY>



Mindfulness

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is associated with positive psychological strengths such as emotional intelligence, the ability to cope with failure, as well as improving relationship functioning, help-seeking behaviour and self-care (Neff 2004; Neff and Germer 2013; Neff et al. 2018; Krageloh et al. 2019 cited in Moir & Van den Brink 2020, p. 7).



Mindfulness self-compassion

Learning to be more compassionate towards ourselves allows us to utilise coping strategies that help us adapt when confronting a stressful event (Lloyd & Campion 2017).

The aim is to be able to identify the source of the stressor and have the ability to accept the emotions that are connected to it, whether they are positive or negative (Lloyd & Campion 2017)

Self-compassion break:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJVJsgCtIu0&list=PLMindfulness>

Mindful Activities

Body Scan

1. Lie with your back on the floor or bed
2. Move your awareness through your body as you breath, starting from your toes towards your head as you breath in and back from your head to your toes as you breath out
3. Focus your breath on a certain spot that feels tight or sore until it relaxes



Walking Meditation

1. Take a walk at a comfortable pace
2. Pay attention to how you walk and the sensation in your body as you walk
3. Focus on aspects such as your shoulders swinging, your feet touching the ground, your hips swinging.
4. Match your breathing with your footsteps



Other Mindful Activities

Observing leaf

This exercise requires a leaf and your attention.

- Pick up a leaf and hold it in your hand.
- Give it your full attention for five minutes.
- Notice the colors, the shape, the texture, and the patterns.

This will bring you into the present and align your thoughts with your current experience.



5 Senses

Pay extra attention to the aspects of the environment you normally don't notice or ignore

1. Notice 5 different things you can see
2. Notice 4 different things you can feel
3. Notice 3 different things you can hear
4. Notice 2 different things you can smell
5. Notice 1 thing you can taste



Resilience

Personal qualities or traits of resilience:

- Optimism
- Self-confidence
- level headedness
- Hardiness
- Having the ability to be resourceful during times of adversity



Skills & strategies to promote characteristics of resilience:

- Adopting healthy self-care strategies
- Being aware of personal and environmental triggers
- Communicate and connect with each other
- Engaging in educational resilience-building activities

(Lloyd & Campion 2017; Moir & Van den Brink 2020; White et al. 2021; Young, White & Chilvers 2017)

Have you filled your bucket today?

The bucket represents your mental and emotional health (Bucket Fillers 2021).

Recognise that we have a bucket and that there must be a conscious effort to refill.

Activity:

1. Draw a bucket in the centre of a piece of paper.
2. Brainstorm all of the things that fill your bucket (positive attributes).
3. Brainstorm all of the things that empty your bucket (negative attributes).



Coping Strategies



Self-care and Mindfulness - can be used as a preventative strategy and a coping strategy.

Seeking emotional support - seek help, advice, comfort, and support from parents, friends, professionals and other volunteers (Allen & Leary 2010).

Positive reappraisal - Strive to find the positive outlook on a negative situation (Pavani et al. 2016). For example, think about the quality of life of an injured animal if released back into the wild - euthanasia offers a way to end a wildlife animal's pain and suffering.

Actively avoid ruminations - which is the generation of repetitive and passive thoughts about negative events or feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy as this is an effective way to create more neutral or positive thoughts (Pavani et al. 2016; Lyubomirsky et al. 1999).

More Coping Strategies

Problem focused coping (Pavani et al. 2016):

1. Identify the most stressful aspects of the carer role
2. Break it down into smaller tasks
3. Identify the most stressful aspects of the carer role or what can be changed to make things easier
4. Alter the situation itself, or establish an action plan to change them to make them more manageable.

For example, reducing the amount of animals in care or caring for older animals that require less time.

Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is one's ability to find happiness in their work (Lloyd & Campion 2017).

The gratification one gets from their work from:

- Helping animals in need of care
- Being productive and aware of their meaningful contribution to the community
- Having a sense of personal fulfilment and purpose in all that the job entails
- Achieving personal and work-related goals
- Interacting with the companion animals in their care



(Levitt & Gezinski 2020; Moir & Van den Brunk 2020)

Additional Resources

Resources for Self-care

- Self-care: <https://twogreenthreads.org/a-self-care-resource-for-wildlife-volunteers/>
- Podcasts for Wildlife Volunteers:
<https://twogreenthreads.org/wildlife-heroes-caring-for-carers-podcast/>
- Building resilience: <https://twogreenthreads.org/take-care-to-give-care/>
- Learn how to meditate (2 min video): <https://youtu.be/qoXyKtWwEg>
- Understanding and coming to terms with psychological trauma:
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/recovery/recovery-online/>
- Tips for Falling Asleep: <https://youtu.be/FuTdHtDY>
- Mental health help & support: <https://twogreenthreads.org/mental-health-help-and-support/>
- Bushfire recovery:
<https://twogreenthreads.org/bushfire-recovery-resources-to-help-our-community/>

Mental Health Helplines

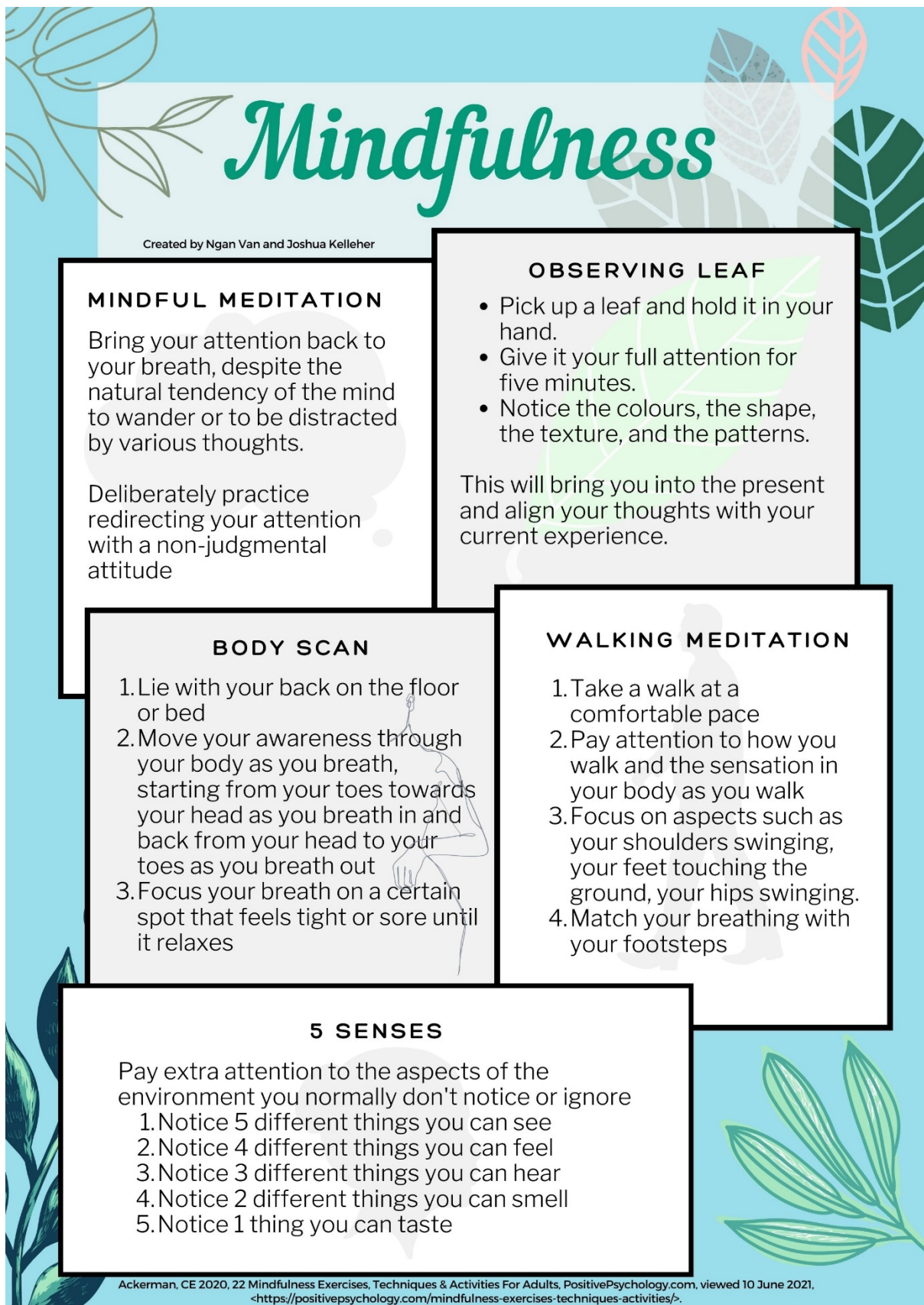
- Lifeline | 13 11 14
- Wildtalk | 1300 307 111 | <https://wildtalk.org.au/>
 - Counselling service to provide mental health assistance for wildlife volunteers
- Beyond Blue | 1300 224 636
- MensLine Australia | 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service | 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline | 1800 551 800
- Headspace | 1800 650 890
- QLife | 1800 184 527
- Relationships Australia | 1300 364 277
- ReachOut Australia | <https://au.reachout.com/>

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Appendix G: 3 Key Slides

Caring for Carers Resource:
Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Wildlife Volunteers

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc (SOWFI)

Created by Jessica Kelliker and Ngan Yao

SOWFI
SAVE OUR WILDLIFE FOUNDATION INC.

University of South Australia



	Compassion Fatigue (Levitt & Gezniski 2020) (Lloyd & Campion 2017)	Burnout (Lloyd & Campion 2017) (Cheung 2005)	Trauma (Bennett & Rohlf 2005) (Moir & Van den Brink 2020)
<i>*Early signs and symptoms* (Bakker & Peeters 2003, Kross, Lohman & Shandberg 1997)</i>			
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absenteeism or presenteeism Persistent fatigue Social withdrawal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cynicism Inefficacy Feeling trapped Reduced self-care Increased passiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrusive feelings Recurrent thoughts Avoidance of emotions Fear Sleep difficulties
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilt Sleep disturbances Mood swings Feelings of powerlessness Excessive complaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headaches Muscular pain Fever Emotional exhaustion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrusive images Nightmares Negative cognitions Hyperarousal symptoms Avoidance symptoms

Coping Strategies

- Self-care
- Building resilience
- Mindfulness
- Positive Reappraisal
- Actively avoiding Ruminations
- Problem focused coping
- Compassion satisfaction
- Communicating and connecting with team members/team leaders
- Seeking emotional supports
- Accessing resources provided by SOWFI or mental health services
- Wildtalk - 1300 307 111**



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