



SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

"Working together to improve the welfare of reservation dogs and cats"

"Diné Bikéyah bikáá'góó, ahí-neilnishgo lééchaa'i dóó mósí baa' ádahwiilyáago"

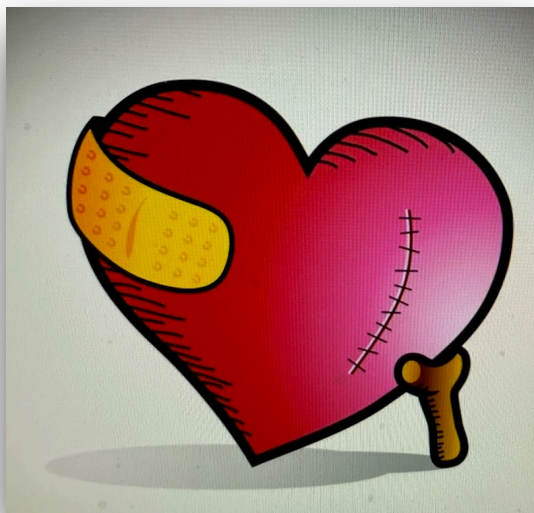
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Holding on to compassion

Compassion fatigue, sometimes called secondary traumatic stress or vicarious trauma, is the emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from prolonged exposure to the suffering of others. It leaves anyone in emotionally demanding roles feeling depleted, disconnected, and overwhelmed. It arises from the chronic stress of caring for beings



who are suffering, and unlike burnout, it stems specifically from the emotional toll of empathy.

Positions in healthcare, education, social services, and emergency services are often the first ones that come to mind when vicarious trauma manifests. Do you know which folks often get overlooked? Folks in the animal rescuing. When most people think of animal rescuers, they think of saving a cute kitten from a drainpipe or feeding an appreciative pup that is wandering the streets. How can one be traumatized from that?

The reality is, rescuers and fosters witness some of the most horrific situations involving animals.

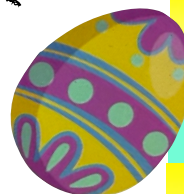
And the kicker is, once we've saved and rehabilitated one animal, we turn around and there is a multitude of others needing care.

A lack of available resources significantly contributes to compassion fatigue by placing excessive emotional and physical demands on rescuers. When essential tools—such as time, funding, and support—are insufficient, individuals are forced to shoulder more responsibilities without the means to adequately cope. This imbalance can lead to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and a diminished ability to empathize, all of which are key indicators of compassion fatigue. Over time, the inability to provide quality care despite one's best efforts fosters feelings of helplessness, frustration, and guilt.

Additionally, those of us working in animal rescue often carry a deep personal commitment to our cause, which can make it difficult to set boundaries or take necessary breaks. The relentless demand for our time and empathy may go unacknowledged, leading to feelings of isolation and helplessness.

After experiencing compassion fatigue, self-care is not just a luxury—it's essential for healing and rebuilding resilience. The first step in self-care after compassion fatigue is acknowledging and validating your experience. Many people feel guilty or

Continued on back



The Numbers

Jan.-March: 22 animals adopted; 44 remain in foster care

The Money

Vet expenses \$11028;
Foster supplies \$5542;
Transport \$1829;
Community outreach \$685

Ahehee' Thank you!

Airport Animal Hospital, Cedar Animal Medical, Coconino Humane Society, Continental Animal Wellness, Durango Animal Hospital, Kaibab Veterinary Clinic, Montezuma Veterinary Clinic, Nav Nation Veterinary Services, Prescott Animal Hospital, Rez Solutions, San Juan Veterinary Hospital, Dr. Sand, C. & G. Ames, K. Arrington, K. Ashcraft, P. Simonson, J. Barbour, C. Beck, L. Burke, A. McGregor, J. Deuby, F. Duran, P. Edmondson, W&C Foote, C. Gonzales, C. Greiner, G. Graham, M&R Kearney, S. Leitner, S. McGregor, J. Myers, Peacock, J. Patterson, D. Paxton, L. Reed, C. Roberts, R. Sherwin, C. Starr, P. Stovall, and all who fostered, adopted, donated, prayed, transported or contributed in any way.

In Memoriam

Sarah McGregor in memory of Joan and Bill Caryl;
Amanda and Eric Lucas in memory of the inimitable Hairy Potter



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B L A C K H A T H U M A N E S O C I E T Y

Battling compassion fatigue (*continued from Page 1*)

ashamed for needing a break, especially when they're in roles that revolve around helping. But recognizing that your own well-being is crucial to your ability to care is a powerful and necessary shift. This means giving yourself permission to rest, to say no, and to prioritize your own needs without guilt.

Restorative self-care involves more than bubble baths and days off—it's about creating boundaries, cultivating emotional awareness, and reconnecting with sources of joy and meaning. This might look like engaging in reflective practices like journaling or meditation and rediscovering hobbies or activities that once brought peace or pleasure. It also can look like finding a support system with whom you can vent, rage, or even cry. Please keep in mind it is equally important to pay attention to physical self-care—getting enough sleep, nourishing your body, moving it gently, as it also plays a critical role in emotional recovery.

Ultimately, healing from compassion fatigue involves reclaiming a sense of balance and self-worth. It's a gradual process of

replenishment that reminds you that your capacity to care deeply is a strength, not a weakness, but one that requires tending and protection.

I know your heart aches for every animal that suffers, and it's because of that deep compassion that you feel this pain. It's a beautiful thing—to care so much. But the truth is, no one person can save them all. What you *can* do—the love you've already given, the lives you've touched, the voices you've raised—*that matters*. Every act of kindness shifts the balance. Every rescued life changes the world for that one being, and that's a kind of magic not everyone is brave enough to make.

You're not alone in this. You are part of a quiet, powerful army of hearts that refuse to give up. So, rest when you need to. Grieve when you must. But know that even in your heartbreak, you are helping to heal the world.

— Dr. Kim Kalas, rescuer and psychologist