



A Letter From The President

March/April 2015

Spring is just around the corner and with that comes an annual renewal. The trees bud, flowers bloom and new leaves develop. Animals emerge from hibernation. The sun shines, the snow melts. This process always fascinates and inspires me, and it gives us all a reminder that we need renewal as well, as we shuck off the cold and dreariness of winter and embrace the sunshine of spring. For those struggling with depression or other mental health disorders, this transition can be difficult.

Like many of our feline patients, we veterinarians are good at hiding our pain or distress. In my last letter, I challenged all of you to join me in my New Year's resolution to improve our work-life balance. So how are you doing so far? It can be difficult, I know, juggling compassion fatigue, long lonely hours trying to run a clinic and the pressures associated with our jobs in general. These things all contribute to a higher than normal suicide rate for our profession. In light of this trend, we should actively work to bring mental health to the forefront and help our fellow colleagues who may be struggling.

As an advocate for mental health awareness I will continue to touch on this throughout the year. The KCVMA is working on providing resources for our veterinary community, including professionals that you can seek out privately and seminars that cover topics like dealing with compassion fatigue and grief counseling (both for our clients and for ourselves) along with general stress relief practices.

Connecting as a veterinary community allows us to reach out and help each other. In an effort to do this, we have developed an online forum similar to VIN. Please visit members.kcvma.com to check it out. Once you log in to your profile, click the "Members Only" menu, and then choose the "KCVMA VIN" link. Once there, you can post questions to fellow colleagues (about cases, practice management, general help and support), post equipment for sale, etc. The more members who participate the more engaging and beneficial it becomes for us all. We encourage

you to take a look and try it out!

We are also increasing the number of social events available for our members. The next one will be a Sporting KC game May 16th at 7 pm. It went over so well last time we are doing it again! We are organizing a pre-game tailgate, with details to follow on the website (www.kcvma.com).

We are looking to increase and diversify the socials moving forward to allow our membership better networking opportunities.

As we continue to try and serve the needs of our membership, you may receive email surveys asking for your opinion. I ask that you please respond so we can further refine the services available for our members and improve your KCVMA membership!



Christi Belew

President - cbelew@kcvma.com

Under Pressure: Preventing and Treating Compassion Fatigue Among Veterinarians

BY: JEN NIGRO

Compassion fatigue is a common problem among helping professions. Doctors, nurses, therapists, EMS workers, and yes, veterinarians, can all grow weary of the energy and emotion necessary to do their jobs every day. But concern is growing quickly over the impact of compassion fatigue among veterinarians, especially after the suicides of two high-profile veterinarians: Dr. Shirley Koshi last February, and Dr. Sophia Yin in September. Danna Dahl, LCPC, LCMFT, is a mental health counselor in Overland Park. She says veterinarians are particularly susceptible to compassion fatigue because unlike human doctors, veterinarians have to work with two populations—the animal and its owner. “Not only do you have to deal with your own feelings toward animals and the stress that comes with working with the actual patient, you also have to deal with the secondary feelings and emotions that come from the families,” she says. This is compounded because animals can’t talk about what ails them, while in many cases, human patients can.

Compassion fatigue is a form of burnout specific to individuals who work in the helping professions. It is pervasive in exhibiting for a prolonged period of time across environments. “Everyone has a bad day. Everyone has a time when they feel more down, or more tired, frustrated or angry,” Dahl notes. “But when we look at compassion fatigue, we are looking for symptoms that are a marked change over a period of time and that impact a variety of different contexts. You’ll see them at home, at church, in social settings, everywhere.” Symptoms can include cynicism, stereotyping and negativity.

Recognizing Compassion Fatigue

It’s important, says Dahl, to be on the lookout for signs of compassion fatigue in yourself and others in your practice. You’ll see the signs in six different contexts:

- **Emotional**

Dahl says the emotional impact of compassion fatigue can lead to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, emptiness or resentment. It can be aimed at the job itself or at co-workers or managers and exhibit as depression, irritability, guilt and anxiety. A person with compassion fatigue might feel trapped by responsibilities or victimized by their jobs. Even small changes can be draining.

- **Behavioral**

“When compassion fatigue sets in, you might see people missing more work,” says Dahl. “You might see them being antagonistic, you might see aggression or defensiveness.” This can include having less tolerance for problems that arise as well as others’ stress.

- **Physical**

The physical symptoms of compassion fatigue include low energy, chronic fatigue and more illness in general. You might have trouble sleeping or eating, experience gastrointestinal symptoms or even feel physical pain.

- **Relational**

“If you have someone who is really social they may begin to withdraw and pull away from other people,” says Dahl. “They might have increased conflict or a hard time connecting with others. They’re not focused on the relationship.” A person dealing with compassion fatigue may also start to depersonalize those in need of help.

- **Spiritual**

“Everyone has that feeling that they’re part of something bigger than themselves,” says Dahl. “When they reach compassion fatigue they begin to turn away from that or question that. There’s a loss of meaning and purpose.”

Prevention and Treatment

Dahl says preventing and treating compassion fatigue are very similar processes. “The most important thing people need to remember is that self-care cannot be considered a luxury,” she explains. “We cannot provide good care for other people or animals if we don’t take good care of ourselves. It’s really important to change that mindset about self-care.” Dahl says the first thing she encourages her patients to do is to be as good to themselves as they are to other people. “Taking time out for ourselves and engaging in activities that nourish us and bring us joy and fulfillment is important. We’ve got to be able to build some fun into our lives.”

Relationships are also key when it comes to overcoming compassion fatigue. “They have to be relationships that are reciprocal, not just relationships where we give and don’t get anything back,” cautions Dahl. “We need to engage with another person who engages back.”

Another element to avoiding compassion fatigue is to find meaning in your life. Do volunteer work that fulfills you, but make sure there is at least some separation from your work life. “Sometimes it’s good to do volunteer work that uses the same skills as your job, but sometimes we need to get completely away,” she notes. “We have to set limits and we have to say no. No doesn’t have to mean no forever, it might just mean not right now.”

If you find you have too much on your plate, re-evaluate your priorities, then look for balance. But Dahl cautions against seeking perfection. “Let’s say we have 100 units of ourselves that we can choose to give to different activities,” she says. “We have to be intentional about how many units we put in each category. Maybe today I need to put 75 into my job, which leaves me 25 to distribute among my family, friends or other responsibilities. There are times when that decision is made for us, like when we have a really heavy surgery or patient load. But then maybe on the weekend I make choices that prioritize other values. It’s this constant counterbalancing and figuring out what choices I’m making that are important to me.”

When it comes to staving off compassion fatigue, Dahl warns against taking an all or nothing approach. “Think about one thing you really miss in your life or one thing that’s really fulfilling that you could do even just a little bit. Start there, then gradually add to it,” she suggests.

If you find you are unable to implement any self-care strategies, it’s time to seek help. “You become your own worst enemy at that point,” she notes. She encourages you to listen to yourself and listen to feedback from others. “If someone says I don’t think you’re doing very well, or I’m really concerned, those are red flags that maybe you need some outside perspective.”

Working Together

Fighting compassion fatigue is something you can do with others in your practice. “The people in your workplace are the only ones who truly get what you go through in a day,” notes Dahl. “You can go home and tell your spouse or a friend it was

a really rough day, you can even give minute details, but unless they live through that they can’t really get it as well as your coworkers can.” Dahl encourages practice owners to help open up that dialogue among employees. “Employers can really help their employees by creating a culture in the workplace where it’s okay to talk,” she says.

Dr. Jill Speicher, Director of Technical Training and Development at Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners, is doing just that. She arranged for Dahl to hold four sessions on compassion fatigue for Blue Pearl employees. “We had workshops two or three years ago, and people found a lot of value in it,” says Dr. Speicher. “Blue Pearl specializes in emergency medicine as well as critically ill and injured patients, and you tend to deal with more tragic or serious conditions. While you can make a lot of patients better and help a lot of them, you also experience a lot of death. You can get very hardened and calloused and uncaring as a natural defense to protect your own emotional state.” Dr. Speicher hopes the workshops, which will be held in April, will give staff members the knowledge they need to recognize the signs of compassion fatigue in each other and talk about it early on. Dahl thinks it’s a great strategy. “These are the people who know you the most, and if we know each other on a personal basis then we can offer more support,” she says. “We have to change our mindset and our thinking about taking care of ourselves and not view it as selfish, but view it as a way to build ourselves up so we can give to other people.”

If you are in a crisis situation and need immediate help, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 1-800-273-8255.

New KCVMA Board Members



Dr. Stacey Nickell is a 2003 graduate of the University of Missouri CVM. She spent a year working at a practice in her home city of St. Louis before taking a position with Eagle Animal Hospital in Riverside. “I enjoy the daily challenges of private practice,” says Dr. Nickell, who has specific interests in ophthalmology, feline medicine and dentistry. A mother of three (ages eight, five and 14 months), Dr. Nickell still finds time to run, read, practice yoga, and spend time with her family and two dogs. She is excited to add membership on the KCVMA board to that list of activities. “I look forward to helping with the Kansas City veterinary community and forming new professional relationships,” she says.



Dr. Becca Tremble is a 2006 graduate of the University of Missouri CVM. After graduation she interned at Michigan Veterinary Specialists. In 2007 she became an associate veterinarian with Crysler Animal Hospital in Independence, MO. She is especially interested in orthopedic surgery. Dr. Tremble and her husband Matt live in Kansas City, MO, with their 9-month-old daughter Gracelynn and two dogs, Macho and Casey. She enjoys spending time with her family, being outdoors, and attending local and MU sporting events as well as area festivals. “I’m excited to join the board and I’m already learning so much!” says Dr. Tremble.

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All suggestions and comments are welcomed.
Please write or call Wanda Geis.
PO Box 12468
Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468

P 913-381-7823
www.kcvma.com

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Built on the Shoulders of Veterinary Giants: AVMA Presidential Leadership

BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN

During the 152 year history of the AVMA at least 23 presidents of the national association have had a relationship with Kansas or Missouri.

Six presidents in the Kansas City area have been covered in earlier articles. They included:

Sesco Stewart (elected in 1902): Known as a pillar of the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC).

Albert Kinsley (1921): Founder of Kinsley Laboratories in Kansas City and KCVC President and Dean.

Joseph Flynn (1935): Opened one of the first veterinary hospitals in the US exclusively for dogs and cats. Described as Father of Small Animal Practice.

Abner Quin (1954): Called a dynamic champion of the veterinary practitioner.

Joseph Knappenberger (1968): One of 18 veterinarians invited by President Lyndon Johnson to participate in the White House Conference on Health in 1965.

Gerald Johnson (1991): Speaking to a CVC convention in 1992, Dr. Johnson said, "Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes [our] hopes rise to the stars." Past KCVMA President Amanda Donnelly said, "I don't ever remember seeing [him] when he wasn't smiling and offering words of encouragement."

Since those articles were written, another Kansas City area veterinarian has joined the ranks of our national presidents. He is Bonner Springs native **Greg Hammer** (2007). Dr. Hammer is a 1973 Kansas State University CVM graduate. He was recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2001 and was named the CVM Alumni Fellow in 2008. He practices in Dover, DE.

Other presidents include: **Tait Butler** (1900), KSU CVM Professor; **Ralph Dykstra** (1931), first KSU CVM dean 1919 -

1948; **Nicholas Williams** (1932), 1911 KCVC graduate, Texas State Veterinarian for several terms; **Charles Bower** (1943), established the first practice in Kansas exclusively for small animals; **William Hagen** (1947), first director of the National Animal Disease Laboratory in Iowa; **Willard Boyd** (1952), first dean at the University of Minnesota CVM; **General**



Dr. Greg Hammer

Wayne Kester (1956), Air Force Chief of Veterinary Services in the Pacific Theater during World War II; **Eldon Leasure** (1960), KSU CVM Dean 1948 – 1964; **Don Spangler** (1965), grew AVMA investments from \$250,000 to \$5 million. **Jacob Mosier** (1981), served KSU CVM for 47 years and received the Mark Morris Senior Lifetime Achievement Award; **Sam Strahm** (1989), Chairman of Advisory and CE committees, AVMA Foundation and charter member of the Governmental Affairs Council; **Leon Russell** (1993), President of the World Veterinary Association; **James Nave** (2000) Director of AVMA International Affairs; and **Clark Fobian** (2013), Chairman of the AVMA Foundation.

Presidents who have an association with Kansas are **Mark Morris** (1961) and **Mary Beth Leininger** (1996), first woman president of AVMA.

Since 1900, Kansas and Missouri have had a remarkable record of leadership accounting for 20 percent of AVMA Presidents.

Thanks to Dr Howard Erickson (KSU) and Trenton Boyd (MU) for their assistance.

March CE

Speaker:	Dr. Daniel Joffe National Medical Director, Associate Veterinary Clinics Calgary, Alberta, Canada	Location:	Jack Stack BBQ – Freight House Location 101 W 22nd St., Kansas City, MO 64108 (816) 474-74277
Topic:	When Less is Best: Lowest Effective Dose - Optimizing NSAID Protocols and Client Compliance	RSVP:	No fee to attend this event, but RSVP is required by Monday, March 16th. Current membership dues cover all CE. Maximum capacity is 100.
Date:	Thursday, March 19, 2015	Sponsor:	Boehringer Ingelheim
Time:	6:30pm – Dinner, 7pm – Presentation		
CE:	2 hours		

Learning Objectives:

- The major advancements in veterinary pain management in the last two decades
- Strategies for multi-modal pain management
- Types and pathophysiology of common NSAID side effects
- LED - FDA Recommended Standard of individualized dosing to meet your patients' needs
- Practical strategies to incorporate LED and NSAID effectiveness into your practice
- Metacam and LED - a new approach to enhance client satisfaction, compliance and patient well-being



Danny graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon Saskatchewan (with Great Distinction) in 1985. He completed a small animal medicine and surgery internship at Cornell University in 1985-86. He was a founding partner in a multi-specialist referral and emergency clinic (Calgary Animal Referral and Emergency Centre—C.A.R.E. Centre) in 2006, and is currently the Medical Director at this 22-doctor facility, as well as still practicing in his general practice (Landing Animal Clinic) which he opened in 1989. He completed his board certification by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (Canine/Feline Specialty) in 1992, and has recertified this specialty via examination in 2000 and 2010. He lectures extensively to veterinarians and technicians (at least 150 hours per year in each of the last five years) on topics including pain management, dermatology, cardiology, diagnostic ultrasound and zoonotic disease. In the fall of 2012 Danny became the National Medical Director for Associate Veterinary Clinics, Canada's largest group veterinary practice. Dr. Joffe is also a clinical instructor at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Please RSVP by Monday, March 16th by registering at KCVMA.com

April CE

Speaker:	Dr. Joel Sailor Owner, Town & Country Veterinary Clinic Starke, Florida	CE:	2 hours
Topic:	Ringmaster: Using Science and Management Principles to Tame the Flea Circus	Location:	TBD - Watch your email for venue information!
Date:	Thursday, April 16, 2015	RSVP:	No fee to attend this event, but RSVP is required by Monday, April 13th. Current membership dues cover all CE.
Time:	6:30pm – Dinner, 7pm – Presentation	Sponsor:	Merck



Please RSVP by Monday, April 13th by registering at KCVMA.com

Tech Tidbit: What's in a Name?

What's in a name? If you're talking about your website, it can mean the difference between standing out from the crowd or going unnoticed by potential clients. The top tip for choosing a domain name for your website is to make it memorable. Now veterinarians have even more options with the creation of a new .vet domain. This industry-specific domain tells clients right away what your website is about while helping you make your web address memorable. The .vet domain name is available through several web hosting services (use your favorite search engine to shop around). Prices vary depending on the service provider and terms.

There are drawbacks to using a .vet. Experts caution that the majority of people are conditioned to go straight to .com when entering a web address. They recommend setting up a .com in addition to your .vet if you choose to go with the new domain. Remember, when choosing a domain name you want it to be memorable, but you also want to keep it short, easy to spell and include key words that work with your branding.



Summer Social Event: Sporting Kansas City

Join your KCVMA colleagues on **Saturday, May 16 at 7:30** as we enjoy watching Sporting Kansas City take on the Colorado Rapids at Sporting Park. The KCVMA Board is providing two tickets per KCVMA member at no cost. If you wish to purchase extra tickets, they are \$19 each. We plan to tailgate at a nearby restaurant before the match. Full details are still being worked out, so watch your email and the KCVMA website for announcements!

CLASSIFIED ADS

Send your classified ads to: Wanda Geis, PO Box 12468, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468, or email them to classifieds@kcvma.com. Ads must not be over 100 words in length. Classified ads will be run at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited for content. Deadline for the next newsletter is 4/13/15.

Veterinary clinic in south KC metro area looking to fill office manager position. Fast paced, multi-doctor practice, competitive salary. Veterinary technician and hospital management experience preferred. Please call 817-988-7979.

Mission Road Animal Clinic is a full-service small animal hospital providing quality veterinary care to Prairie Village and the surrounding areas for over 35 years. We are looking for a part-time veterinarian, willing to be flexible on hours. Please send resume to drgeb@missionroadanimalclinic.com.

Oxford Animal Hospital in Overland Park, KS, is looking to add a pet stylist to our growing practice. The ideal candidate is: dependable, friendly, flexible, great team work and has the ability to groom all breeds proficiently. Full- or part-time, Saturdays are a must. Must be able to lift 40lbs., 3 + years experience. Ability to groom cats is a plus. Candidates will have a working interview to show skills. You may email resume to oah@oxfordanimalhospital.com, or stop by to fill out an application or drop off a resume, but please no phone calls.

Looking for a full- and/or part-time veterinarian and vet tech/assistant to join our practice and a receptionist. We currently have three vets and are growing rapidly. Our business is expanding greatly and more great help would be lovely. We have an amazing team right now and would love to expand on that. We have lots of great diagnostic equipment, with an awesome support staff and an awesome clientele and their furry friends. Our current staff have been together for a long time and work together amazingly. The clinic has been established for 40 plus years and provides quality care, big hearts, and a special touch to our clientele and patients. We are in the Raytown/Kansas City area. Pay is based on ability. We are looking for a team member, hard worker, with a great sense of humor. Please email if interested in any of these positions at kklnorris@yahoo.com.

Seeking associate for a three doctor small animal practice in Lenexa, KS. We are looking for one possessing the qualities of integrity, good character, understanding, compassion, and honesty, all of the things which have made our profession one of respect. Experience desired but not required. We are a busy practice and continue to grow. Should enjoy both medicine and surgery. Emergencies are referred after hours. We have a good relationship with a nearby specialty clinic if referral is needed. We have digital radiology, Sound SMART D/R, Avimark software with computers installed 12/14, limited in-house lab, IM3 dental equipment. Friendly fun staff and working environment. Contact Dr Jerry Immethun at jci@kc.rr.com with resume. Marketplace Animal Hospital.

Shoal Creek Animal Hospital is a small animal practice seeking a veterinarian to work part- or full-time. Applicant needs to be experienced (1-7 years), motivated, and be interested in offering high-quality medicine. We are a modern facility with boarding, grooming and daycare on-site. We are located in northern Kansas City. No on-call or after-hours emergencies. Please send resume and cover letter to wjdv7700@gmail.com.

Small animal practice in Independence seeks part- or full-time veterinarian. We are busy and see a variety of general practice cases with a diverse clientele. Experience helpful but will consider new graduates. We have an in-house Idexx lab, digital radiography, ultrasound, and a friendly approach. Flexible and supportive workplace. If you are interested, email us at: jcah11@hotmail.com.

RELIEF VETERINARIANS...

Jerome Berkowitz.....913-515-3917 KS/MO	Shelley Lake.....913-533-9905 KS	Shana Stelzer.....913-707-0906 KS/MO
Martin Drey.....785-218-9484 KS	Chris Lewis.....702-767-8012 KS	Paula Vale913-484-7012 KS/MO
Krista Edmiston.....816-522-3913 KS/MO	Tiffany Lewis321-332-4949 KS	Kenneth VanSickle.....816-331-7972 KS/MO
Marsha Heeb.....785-331-2167 KS/MO	Tim Lyon.....913-333-7535 KS/MO	Dennis Weaver.....816-210-6769 KS/MO
Carol Hinton913-897-2794 KS	Mary S. (Peggy) Roth.....785-748-0055 KS/MO	
Kimberly Kessler.....913-548-1686 KS/MO	Dennis Smith.....913-636-4206 KS	

CERTIFIED SPECIALISTS

Acupuncture:

Teresa Bradley-Bays, DVM, CVA, DABVP (ECM)
816-331-3120
Sheila Dodson DVM, CVA 913-825-3330
Linda Faris, DVM, CVA 816-640-3155

Leanne Landau Kasitz, DVM, CVA 913-897-5595
Sandi Leonard, DVM, CVA, CVFT, CAC
913-706-0411
Rebecca Lu, DVM CVA 913-825-3330
Matt Peuser, DVM, CVA, CVPP 913-764-1415

Michelle Rhodes, DVM, CVA 816-252-5105
John Rowe, DVM CVA 816-363-4922
Susan Vodraska, DVM, CVA 816-255-8361

VETERINARY DIPLOMATES

Cardiology:

Laura Hatton¹, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563

Dentistry:

Susan E Crowder, DVM, Dipl. AVDC 913-742-8686
Scott MacGee, DVM, Dipl. AVDC 913-742-8686
Gary L. Modrcin¹, DVM, Dipl. AVDC 913-642-9563

Dermatology:

David Senter, DVM, DACVD 913-381-3937

Emergency and Critical Care:

Mark Brady, DVM, DACVECC 800-548-8387
Ryan Bragg¹, DVM, DACVECC 913-642-9563
Robin Wall, DVM, ACVECC 913-722-5566

Exotic Companion Mammals:

Teresa Bradley-Bays, DVM, CVA, DABVP (ECM)
816-331-3120

Internal Medicine:

Jeff Dennis¹, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563

Crystal Hoh¹, DVM, MS, ACVIM 913-642-9563

Brian Lucas¹, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM 816-554-4990

Stephanie Pierce¹, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM 913-642-9563

Neurology:

Brian Cellio¹, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM 913-642-9563

Oncology:

Heather Heeb¹, DVM, ACVIM 913-642-9563

Ophthalmology:

Amy Hunkeler, DVM, ACVO 913-381-3937
Heather Kaese, DVM, MS, DACVIM, DACVO
913-381-3937
Susan Keil, DVM, MS, DACVO 913-599-6656
Rustin Sturgeon, DVM, ACVO 913-381-3937

Preventive Medicine:

Mark E. Gants, DVM, Dipl. ACVPM 816-228-3205

Radiology/Ultrasound:

Joanne Burns, DVM, ACVR 785-221-0390

Surgery:

D.A. Allen, DVM, PhD, ACVS 913-722-5566
Kara Forsee¹, DVM, ACVS 913-642-9563
Karl Frees, DVM, MS, ACVS
(Equine) 816-322-7722
Ralph Millard¹, DVM, ACVS 913-642-9563
Heather Towle-Millard¹, DVM, ACVS 913-642-9563
Steve Riley¹, DVM, DVSc, ACVS 913-642-9563

Veterinary Practitioners:

John S. Bradley, DVM, ABVP 785-843-9533
Vern Otte, DVM, ABVP 913-381-3272
Eliza Sundahl, DVM, CVA, ABVP 816-361-4888
Steve White, DVM, ABVP 913-432-7611