

Promoting Compassion Fatigue Resiliency in Animal Research Facilities

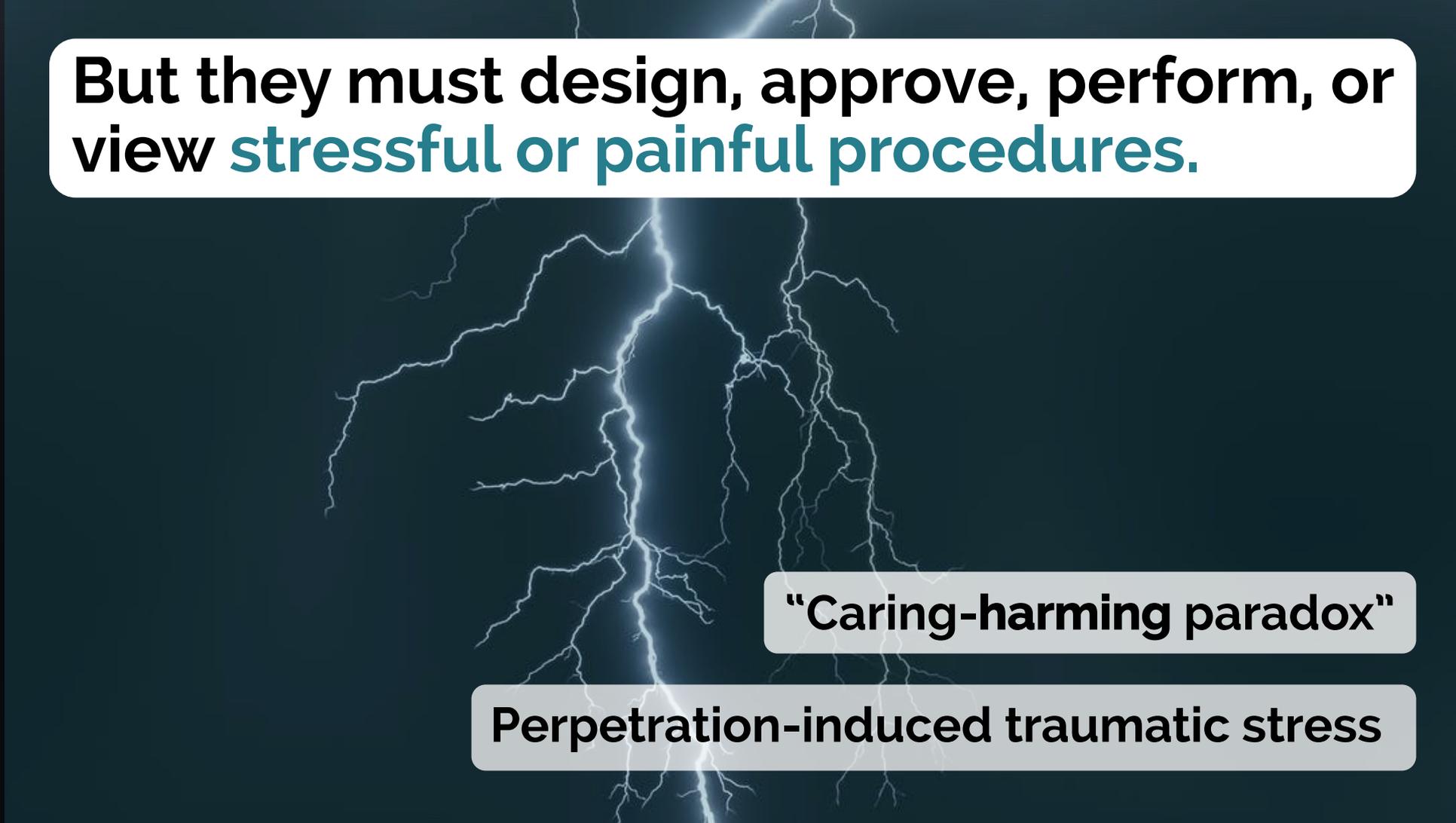


Megan R. LaFollette, MS, PhD | Program Director

Research animal professionals ultimately want to **help people & animals.**

Intrinsic drive
Difficult separating
work & life



A dark blue background with a bright white lightning bolt striking down from the top center, branching out into several smaller bolts. The lightning is the central visual element, symbolizing power, energy, or a sudden event.

But they must design, approve, perform, or view stressful or painful procedures.

“Caring-harming paradox”

Perpetration-induced traumatic stress

This can lead to **moral stress**.



A hand is shown reaching out to touch a large, cracked, and broken mirror. The mirror is shattered into several pieces, with sharp edges and a jagged surface. The background is a textured, brownish-grey surface, possibly concrete or stone. The overall scene conveys a sense of fragility and brokenness.

Most bonds with research animals are broken.

Disenfranchised Grief

Lack of empathy

Lack of organizational support

Disrespect

(Palotta, 2019 & Marton et al. 2019)

Professionals may not feel supported or valued by family, friends, or society in their work.



(LaFollette et al. 2020, Goñi-Balentziaga et al. 2021, Schlanser et al. 2021)

This can lead to workplace stress



The North American 3Rs Collaborative is a non-profit that works to **advance high-quality science & research animal welfare.**

A close-up photograph of a white puzzle piece, which is part of a larger assembly. The puzzle piece is slightly raised and has the words "Refine.", "Reduce.", and "Replace." printed on it in a teal, sans-serif font. The text is arranged vertically, with "Refine." at the top, "Reduce." in the middle, and "Replace." at the bottom. The puzzle piece is surrounded by other white puzzle pieces, some of which are slightly out of focus. The background is a light, neutral color.

Refine.
Reduce.
Replace.

NA3RsC's strategy is to identify initiatives with

Strong Evidence

Big Impact

Real-World Practicality



We received a small pilot grant in Occupational Health & Safety



**NORTHWEST CENTER
FOR OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



Professional Training Opportunities Program (PTOP)

in

Occupational Health & Safety

Our team = 29 individuals from 22 institutions

Alison Hayward, MIT

Beth Greenhough, Keble College, Oxford

Crystal Johnson, Georgetown University

Elizabeth Clemmons, Southwest NPRC

Emily Pearson, Cornell University

Fabienne Ferrara, Consultant

Francesca Perrotta, University of Washington

Heather Hersh, Thrive Well-Being

Jennifer McMillan, Emory University

Lace Lively, Texas Biomedical Research Institute

Lauren Healy, Bristol Myers Squibb

Lauren Young, University of Guelph

Lisa Kelly, University of Georgia

Lisa Stanislawczyk, Bristol Myers Squibb

Liv Brancato-Buentello, Colorado State University

Megan LaFollette, NA3RsC

Pat Frost, Texas Biomedical Research Institute

Preston Van Hooser, University of Washington

Raphael Malbrue, Nationwide Children's Hospital
and The Ohio State University

Rhonda MacAllister, Oregon NPRC

Rita Bellanca, University of Washington

Sally Robinson, AstraZeneca

Sally Thompson-Iritani, University of Washington

Sarah Thurston, Charles River Laboratories

Tara Martin, University of Michigan

Taylor Carroll, Mass General

Temeri Wilder-Kofie, NIH/NIAID/CMB

Theresa Martin, University of Guelph

Vanessa Lee, Emory

A wooden signpost with a white text box overlaid on a background of snow-capped mountains. The signpost is made of weathered wood and has a wooden arrow pointing to the right. The text box is white with rounded corners and contains the following text:

Our objectives are
(1) to develop compassion fatigue resiliency resources for animal research institutions and
(2) pilot this program, assessing its quality/effectiveness

We built a comprehensive compassion fatigue resiliency program



**Longitudinal
Survey**



**Starter Pack
& Resources**



**Interactive
Webinars**



Poster

We replicated questionnaires from validated instruments where possible.

- 1. PROQOL: Burnout, STS, & Compassion Satisfaction**
 - 2. Perceived Stress Scale**
 - 3. Resiliency**
 - 4. Job Satisfaction Scale**
 - 5. Modified Nurse Retention Index**
 - 6. Qualitative**
- 

Caring for Our People. Caring for Our Animals.

Working with research animals can lead to compassion fatigue.

We know you care deeply for our research animals and advancing science. Your work can come with challenges:

- Euthanasia of animals
- Potential animal pain/distress
- Difficulty talking about your work publicly
- Difficulty connecting with others
- Feeling undervalued by society

All of this and more can lead to feeling stressed and burnt out.



Together we can support resiliency.

- Compassion fatigue awareness
- Culture of care
- Work/life balance
- Connections between staff
- The 3Rs & animal welfare
- Self-care including mindfulness & more



na3rsc.org/cf

We facilitated & recorded 5 months of targeted webinars



**Intro to
Compassion
Fatigue
Resiliency**



**Mindfulness for
Everyday Life**



**Great Work
Relationships**



**Culture of Care:
Interactive Stories**

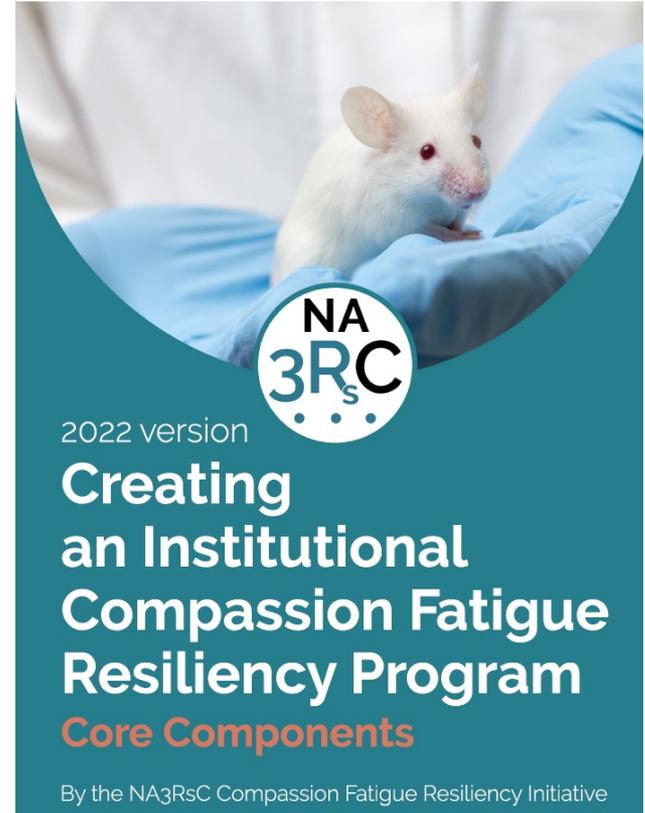


**Making Meaning:
Compassion Satisfaction**

We created extensive support materials

Core Components Packet:

- Timeline
- Guidance on Forming & Maintaining a CF Resiliency Committee
 - Committee membership
 - Example agendas & charter
 - What to expectations
- Sample Budget
- Leadership Buy-in Advice
 - Companion editable slide deck
- A Manager's Role in a Wellness Program



We created extensive support materials

- **Learning Resource Packet:**
 - Overview of CF
 - Self-Care
 - Handling Emotions
 - Gratitude
- **Culture of Care Packet**
- **Activity Idea Packet**



We've created an in-depth evidence-based resource hub.

Compassion Fatigue Resiliency

Caring for our People. Caring for our Animals.

Working with research animals can be challenging, leading to workplace stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. But together we can support resiliency. We have a range of resources designed to promote resiliency for both individuals & institutions.

na3rsc.org/cf

[Webinars](#) [Research Papers](#) [Self-Care](#) [Classes & Consultants](#) [Self-Assessment](#)

Background

Professionals working with research animals want to **help both people and animals**. They **care deeply** for both the research animals and advancing science, but their work can come with many challenging. For example, most of their **bonds with animals are broken** at the end of the study. And during studies they may view animals in unavoidable distress. Furthermore, they may experience **moral & emotional stress** when internally held values or emotions conflict with those that are expressed. They also may not feel supported by society or even friends and family in our work since animal research can have **social stigma and be undervalued**.

Today, I will share a few results from baseline & especially the qualitative data

Timing

- **Baseline**
- **6 months**
- **1 year**
- **2 years**

Measures

- **PROQOL: Burnout, STS, & Compassion Satisfaction**
- **Perceived Stress Scale**
- **Resiliency**
- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Retention Index**
- **Qualitative**

We engaged 7 institutions in US & Canada

- 2 Academic (e.g., Georgetown University)**
- 1 Hospital**
- 4 industry (e.g., Neuralink & AstraZeneca)**

199 individuals replied with enough data for us to analyze

Role

30% Caretakers

30% Researchers

9% Managers

8% Research Techs

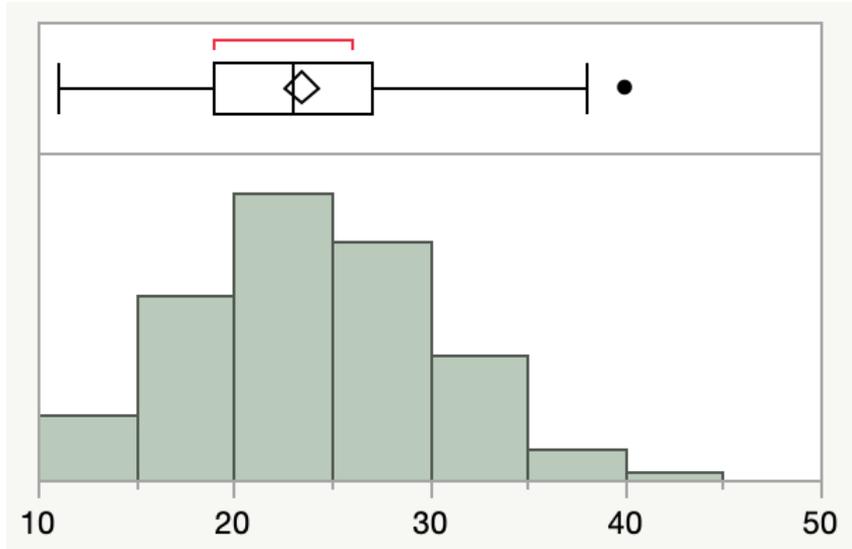
5% Vets

5% Vet Techs

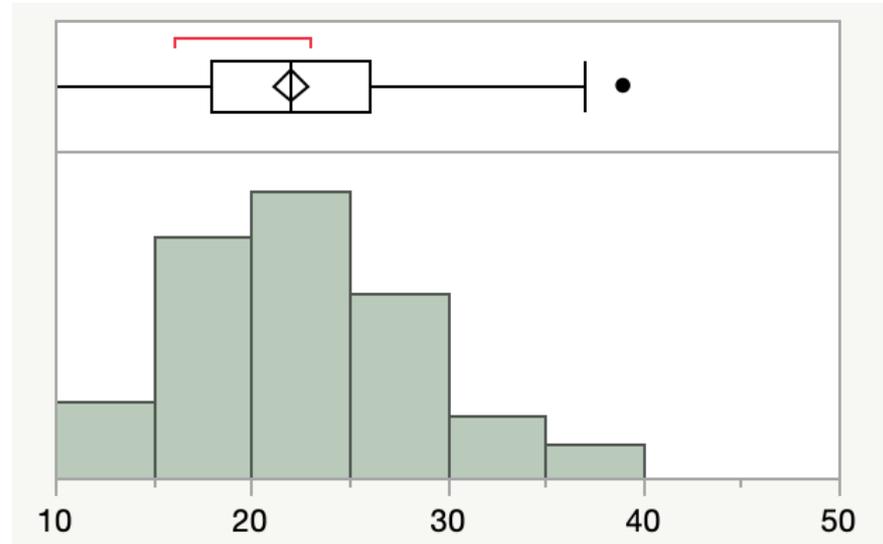
5% IACUC

8% Other

We see a range of levels of burnout & secondary traumatic stress which allows us to explore associations

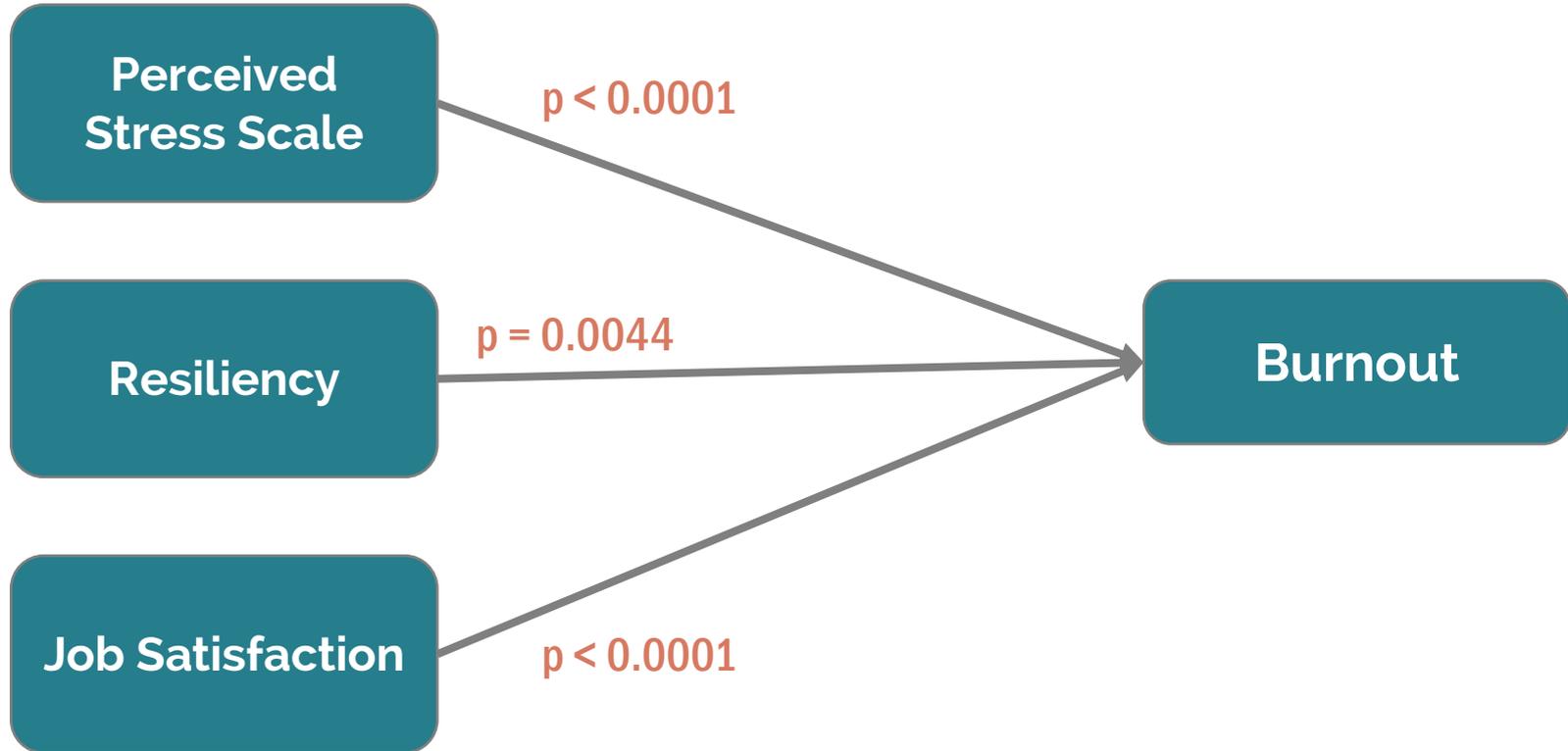


Burnout

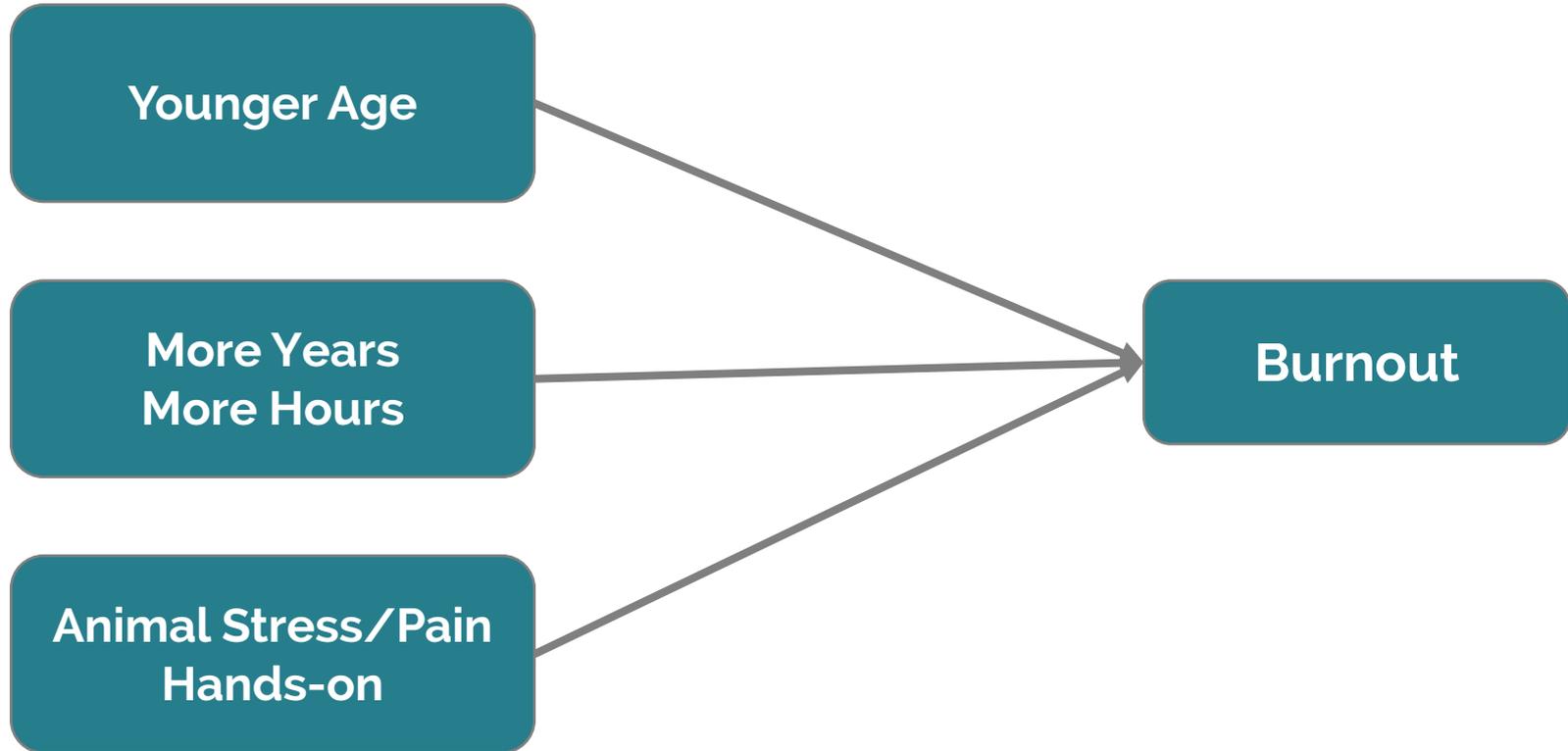


Secondary Traumatic Stress

Higher burnout was associated with several factors.



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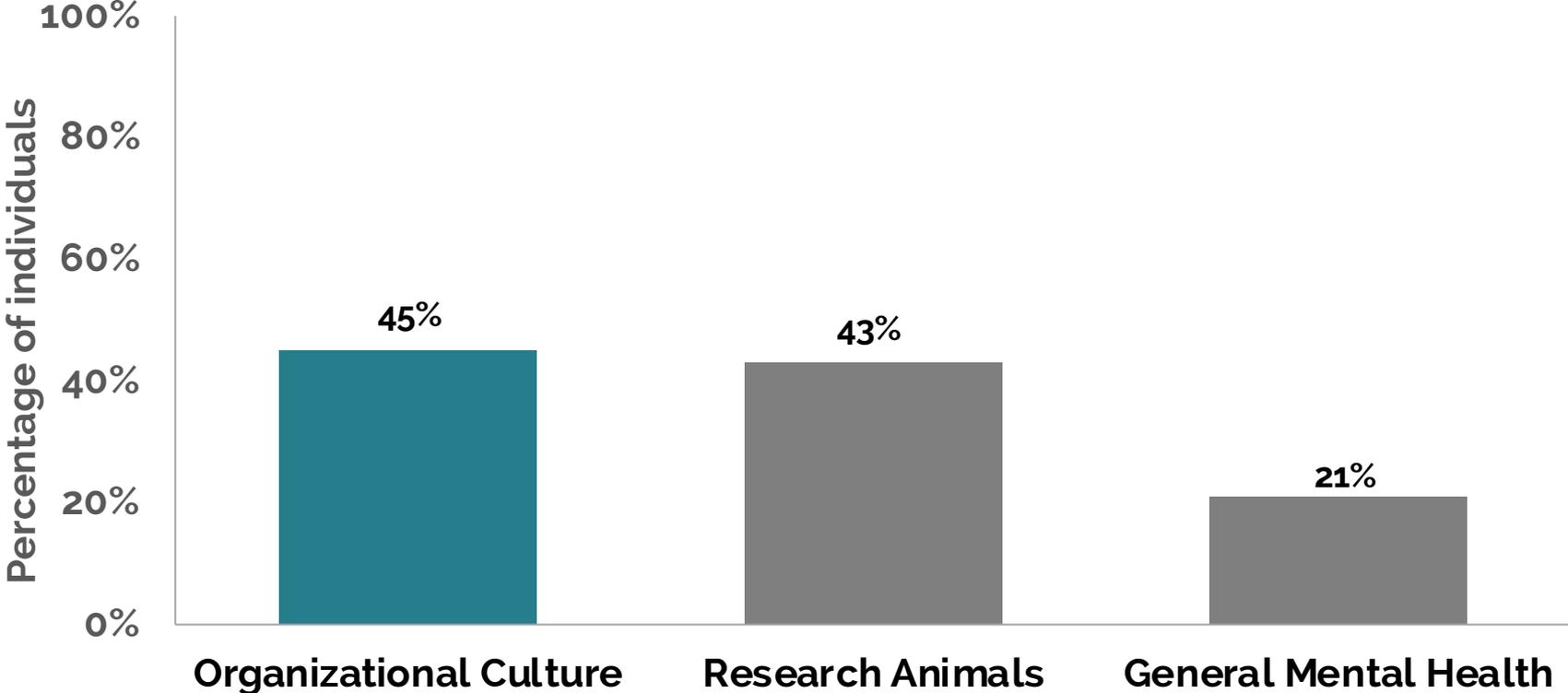


For you personally, what, if anything makes compassion fatigue occur or become worse?

**Credit to
Lauren Young,
U. of Guelph**

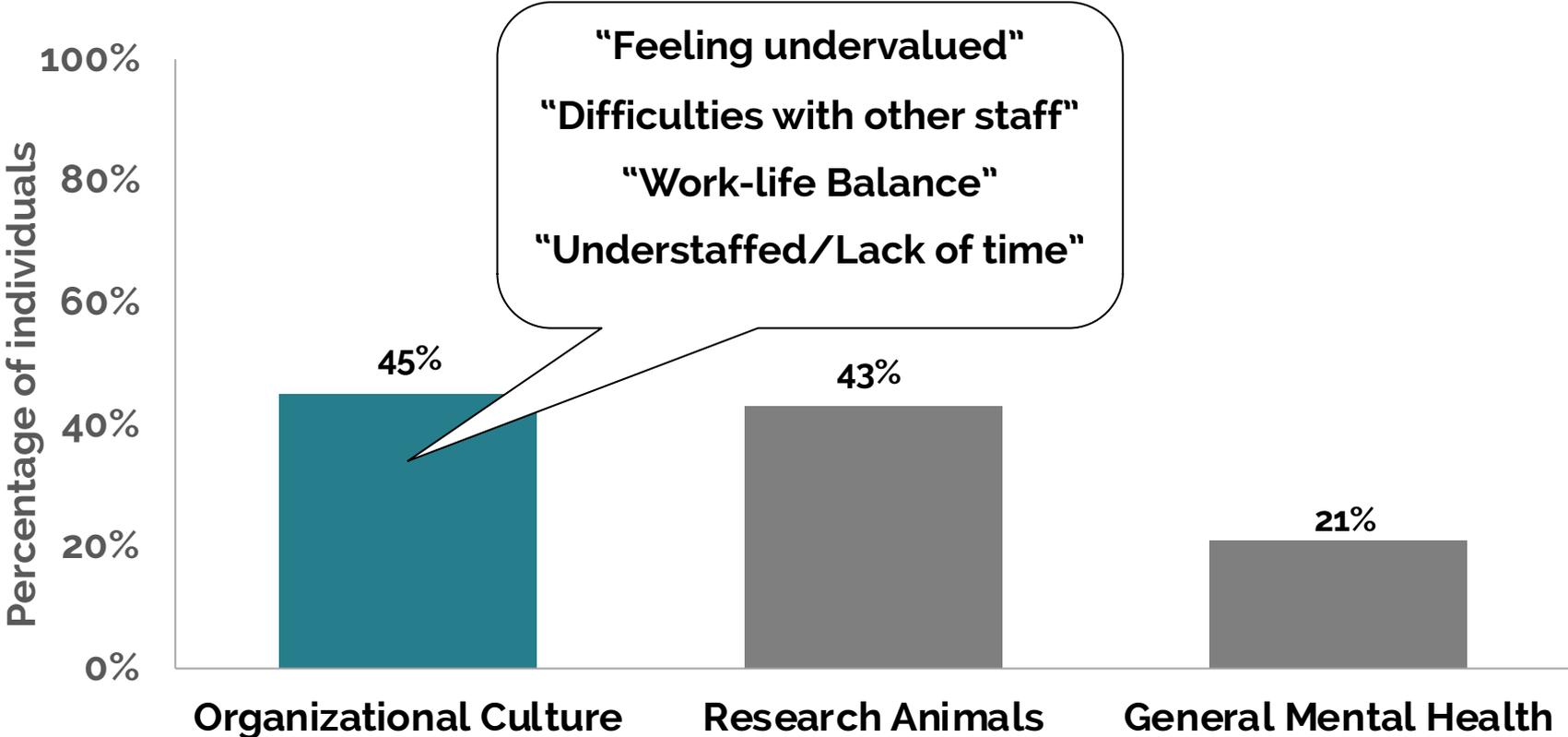


Responses fell into 3 major categories



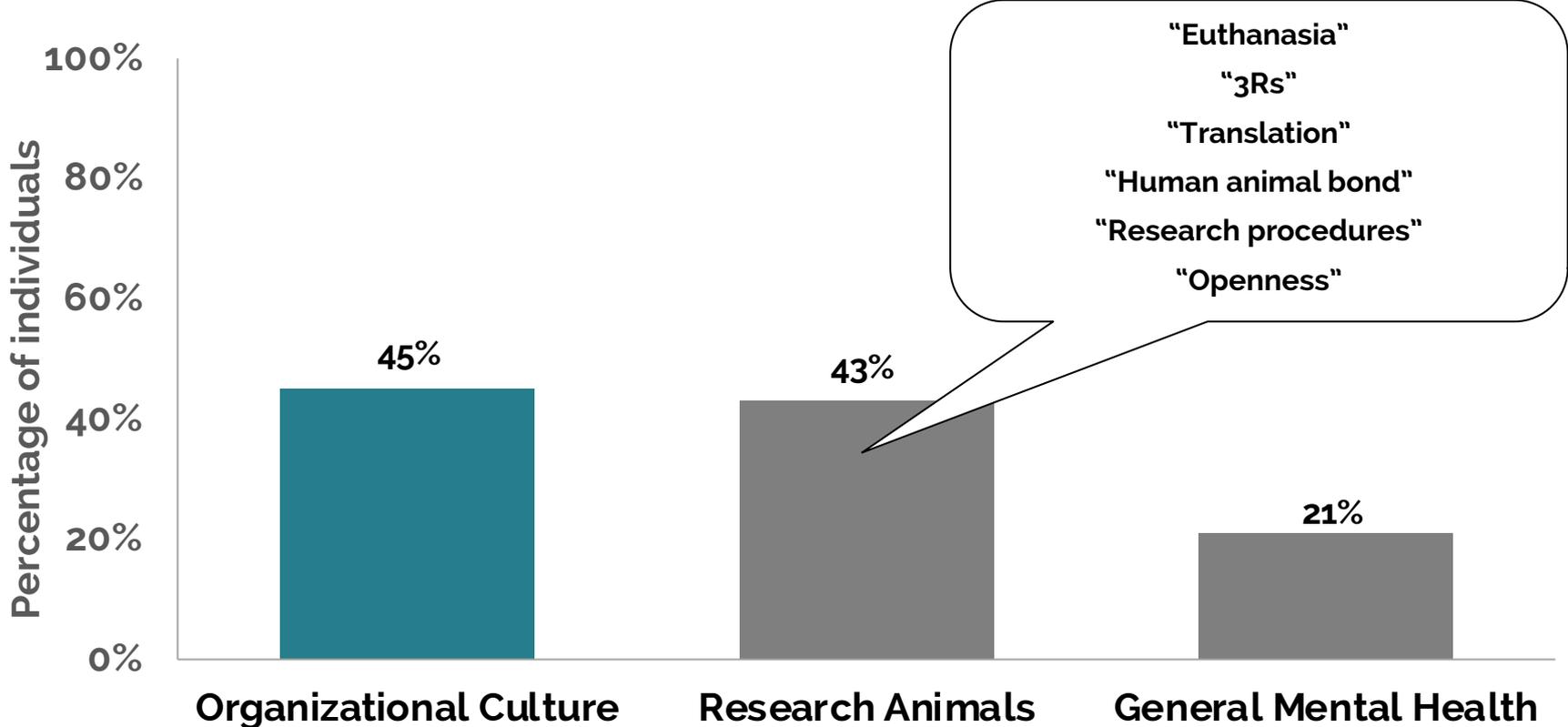
(n = 159 participants)

Responses fell into 3 major categories



(n = 159 participants)

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(n = 159 participants)

What, if anything, do you feel would be the **most beneficial** aspect of an institutional compassion fatigue resiliency program?

Credit to
Lauren Young,
U. of Guelph

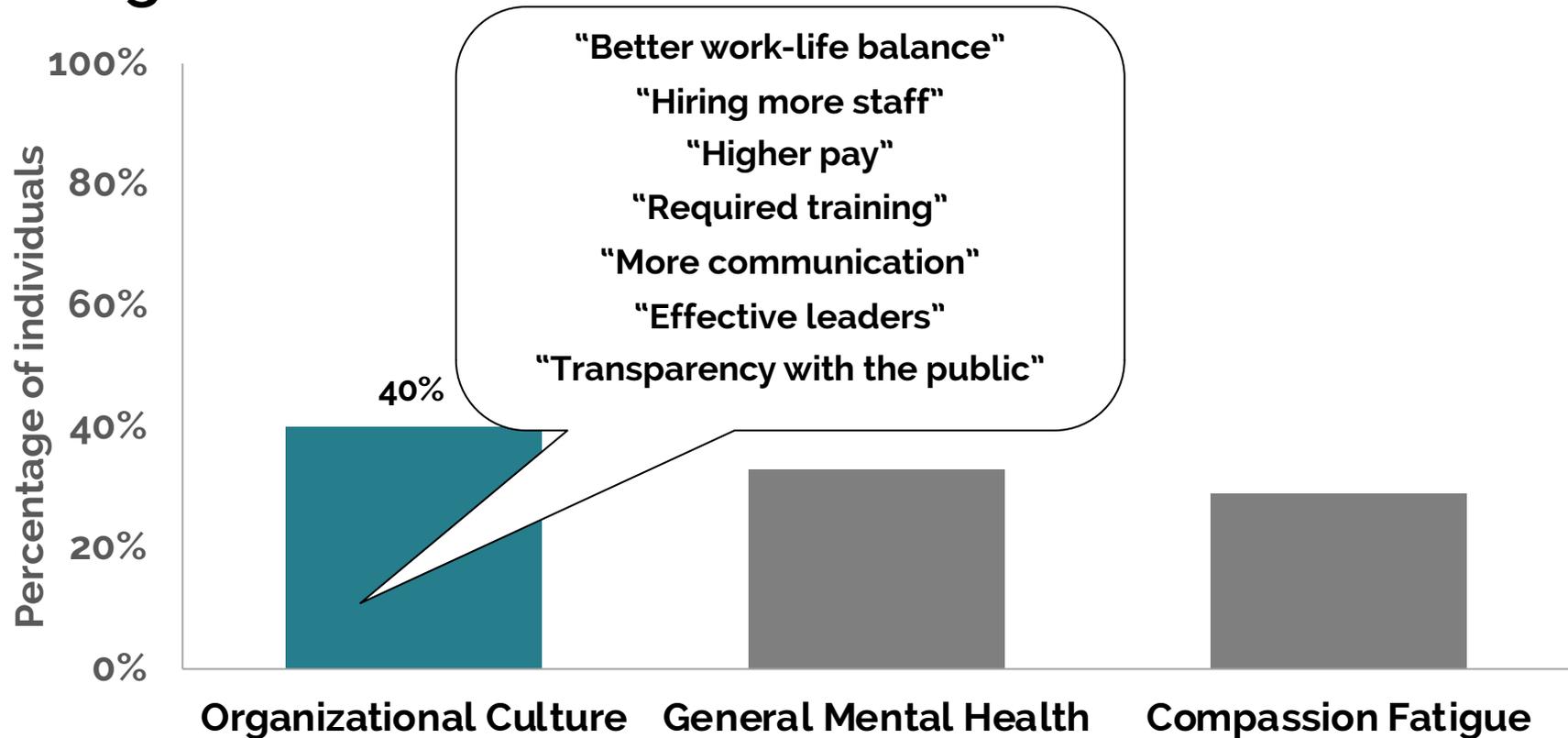


Responses fell into 3 major categories

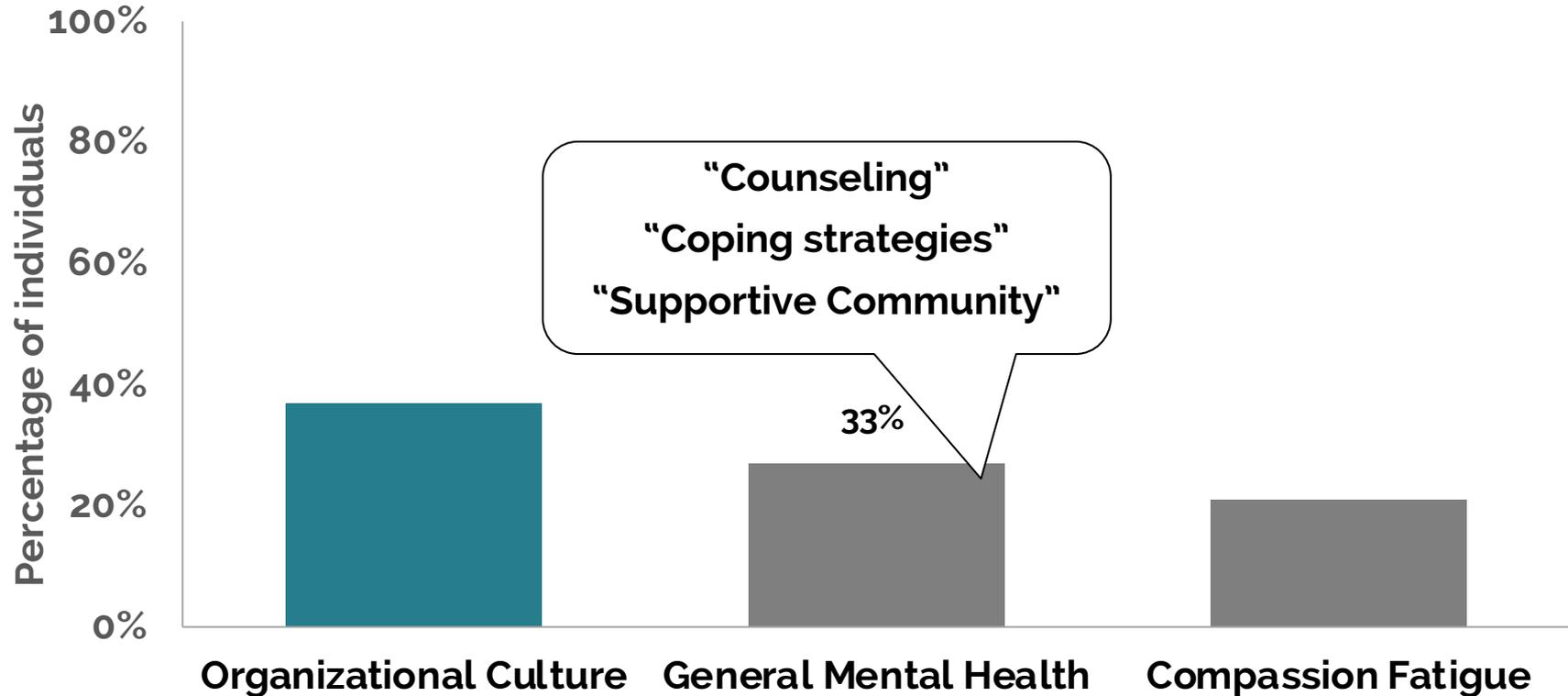


(n = 107 participants)

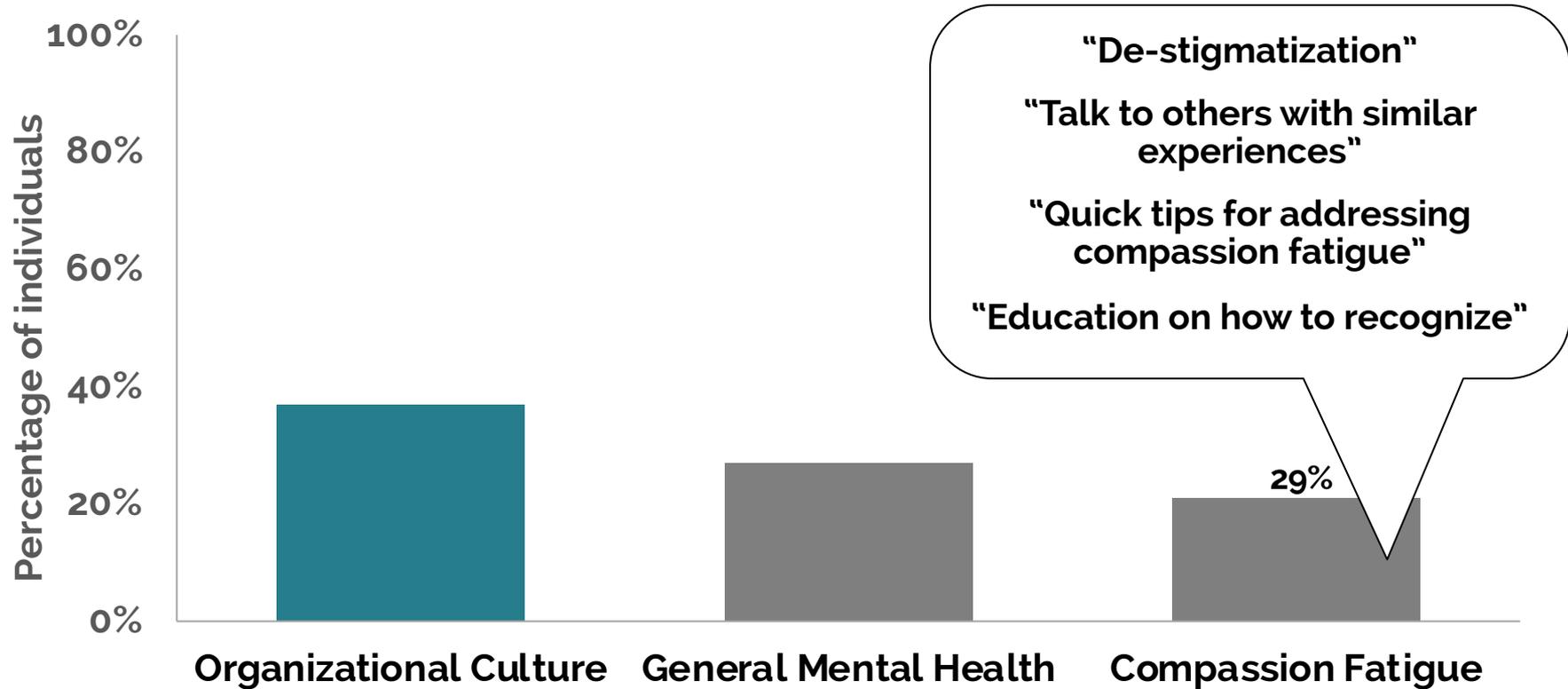
Across sites, participants believed organizational change would be the most beneficial



Across sites, participants believed organizational change would be the most beneficial



Across sites, participants believed organizational change would be the most beneficial



The Preliminary Take-Away

Compassion fatigue is affected by more than unique work with research animals.

Organizational culture & general mental health support are key in promoting resiliency.

