

CE AGENDA

Costa Rica December 8-14 2024

DR. SONJA OLSON



DR. SONJA OLSON GREW UP WITH HER HUMAN AND ANIMAL FAMILY MEMBERS MOSTLY IN MARYLAND, USA. SHE GRADUATED FROM VIRGINIA-MARYLAND REGIONAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE WITH A FOCUS ON EXOTIC ANIMAL AND CONSERVATION MEDICINE. HER PROFESSIONAL PATH LED TO OVER 25 YEARS OF PRACTICING CLINICAL SMALL ANIMAL AND EXOTIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE IN BOTH PRIVATE AND CORPORATE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS IN VIRGINIA AND IN FLORIDA. THE MYRIAD OF OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH, MENTOR, AND LEAD DURING THESE YEARS WERE DEEPLY FULFILLING AND INSPIRATIONAL. THROUGH THESE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES, THERE DEVELOPED AN INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE FAR-REACHING NEED FOR VETERINARY WELL-BEING AWARENESS AND HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES. THIS COMBINATION FOSTERED SONJA'S PASSION TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND INCREASINGLY SUPPORT, THE HOLISTIC HEALTH OF THE VETERINARY CAREGIVERS.

DR. OLSON'S PREVIOUS ROLE AS A VETERINARY WELLNESS EDUCATOR FOR THE BLUEPEARL HEALTH & WELL-BEING TEAM, WAS WORKING ALONGSIDE LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS. THE TEAM HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES AS WELL AS FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS ON WELL-BEING CONCEPTS THAT FOSTER A MORE COMPASSIONATE, HEALTHY CAREGIVING COMMUNITY AND CULTURE. DR. SONJA SEEKS TO SUPPORT VETERINARY ASSOCIATES MORE GLOBALLY THROUGH PODCASTS, WRITING, SPEAKING VIRTUALLY AND IN PERSON TO VETERINARY COLLEAGUES, AND CREATIVELY COLLABORATING WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED SOULS.

DR. OLSON FOUNDED HER WELLNESS PLATFORM, HEARTSTORMING WELLNESS, IN 2022 TO SUPPORT THESE WELL-BEING ENDEAVORS. HER [RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK](#), CREATING WELL-BEING AND BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE VETERINARY PROFESSION: A CALL TO LIFE, WAS RELEASED IN MARCH 2022 THROUGH ROUTLEDGE PUBLISHERS.

DAY 2

MEETING THE MOMENT: LEARN HOW TO STRESS BETTER



STRESS HAPPENS. IN VETERINARY CAREGIVING ENVIRONMENTS, THE WORK INEVITABLY INCLUDES NAVIGATING CONVERSATIONS AND WORK THAT OFTEN IS EMOTIONAL AND STRESSFUL TO THE INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS INVOLVED. IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL:

- NORMALIZE CONVERSATIONS: UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE COMMON EXPERIENCES OF VETERINARY CAREGIVERS GLOBALLY IN 2024.
- EMBRACE EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE: INCREASE AWARENESS AND COMFORT IN EXPRESSING EMOTIONS RELATED TO STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE IN CAREGIVING ROLES.
- BUILD RESILIENCE: EXPLORE FRAMEWORKS, SKILLS, AND PRACTICES TO FORTIFY PERSONAL STRATEGIES FOR COPING, PROACTIVELY ADDRESSING DISTRESS AND FATIGUE, AND SUPPORTING HOLISTIC HEALTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF WORK.
- EXPLORE MINDFUL COPING TECHNIQUES: LEARN EVIDENCE-BASED MICROBREAK SKILLS AND COGNITIVE REFRAMING FOR INTENTIONAL RESPONSES TO STRESS, PROMOTING A HEALTHIER REACTION TO CHALLENGES.
- NEURO-HACK FOR BALANCE: EXPLORE THE CAPACITY TO "NEURO-HACK" USING POLYVAGAL WISDOM, BALANCING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND REGULATING EMOTIONS WHEN STRESS PUSHES YOU BEYOND YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE.

DAY 3

THE INTELLIGENT EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EQUANIMITY AND RADICAL ACCEPTANCE



EQUANIMITY IS AN ESSENTIAL MINDFULNESS PRACTICE THAT BRINGS WISDOM, BALANCE, AND PERSPECTIVE WHEN CHALLENGING LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE. IT IS THE INTENTIONAL CHOOSING OF COURAGEOUS COMPASSION FOR SELF AND FOR OTHERS WHILE LETTING GO OF OUTCOME FOR A SITUATION OR FOR ANOTHER PERSON. IT IS NOT INDIFFERENCE OR APATHY. RATHER, EQUANIMITY IS INTELLIGENT EFFICIENCY OF ENERGY AND TIME INVESTMENT BY RECOGNIZING THAT WE CAN ACCEPT REALITY, WE CAN CONTROL WHAT WE CAN CONTROL (LARGELY OUR MINDSET AND OUR RESPONSES TO SITUATIONS), AND WE CAN REMAIN PRESENT WITH LESS DISTRESS AND EMOTIONAL REACTIVITY WITH ALL THAT ARISES. RADICAL ACCEPTANCE COMPLIMENTS EQUANIMITY WITH THE CONCEPT THAT 'SUFFERING' OCCURS WHEN RESISTANCE TO CIRCUMSTANCES OCCURS. THE SAYING IS "PAIN IN LIFE IS INEVITABLE, BUT SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL." WITH LESS STRIVING, RESISTING, AND EFFORTS TO CONTROL OUTCOME THERE IS MORE CAPACITY TO REMAIN OPEN-HEARTED, OPEN-MINDED, AND LESS DISTRESSED. IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL TAKE TIME TO EXAMINE THESE VERY HELPFUL MINDFULNESS CONCEPTS AND PRACTICE HOW TO USE THEM IN 'REAL LIFE.' LIKE ANY MUSCLE, REPETITIVE UTILIZATION OF THESE MINDFUL MOMENTS IMBUED WITH COMPASSION CAN STRENGTHEN VETERINARY CAREGIVER'S CAPACITY TO STAY PRESENT, CALM, AND CONNECTED TO THEIR CAREGIVING NATURES AS STRESS OCCURS IN THEIR LIVES.

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DAY 4

EMPATHIC STRAIN AND SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS - IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS TO VETERINARY BURNOUT

IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL EXPLORE THE UPDATED CONVERSATIONS AND RESEARCH AROUND COMPASSION FATIGUE, EMPATHIC STRAIN, SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS, MORAL DISTRESS, AND BURNOUT AS PHENOMENON ASSOCIATED WITH CAREGIVING PROFESSIONS WITH A FOCUS ON OUR VETERINARY TEAMS. WHEN WE CAN MORE ACCURATELY IDENTIFY WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US, TO COLLEAGUES, AND TO CLIENTS, WE ARE BETTER PREPARED TO CREATE AND APPLY MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES. THIS IS THE POWERFUL SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE APPROACH OF "NAME IT TO TAME IT." WITH ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING AND LANGUAGE, WE CAN INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY DEVELOP A MORE ROBUST AND PRACTICAL 'TOOLBOX' OF COPING PRACTICES TO MEET CAREGIVING CHALLENGES AS THEY OCCUR IN VETERINARY PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTS.



DAY 5

HUMAN-FOCUSED CULTURE SHIFT IN VETERINARY MEDICINE - THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE APPROACH

VETERINARY MEDICINE ENVIRONMENTS ARE SPACES OF DEEPLY MEANINGFUL WORK, OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH, AND POTENTIALLY POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LIVES OF ANIMALS AND OF THE HUMANS THAT CARE FOR THEM. EQUALLY, IN MEDICAL CARE ENVIRONMENTS THERE IS INEVITABLY HIGH EMOTIONS, WORK-RELATED STRESS, AND POTENTIAL FOR SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS. THE KEY TO FORTIFYING A SUSTAINABLY HEALTHY, ENGAGED CAREGIVING TEAM AND LEADERSHIP IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CHALLENGES AND TO CULTIVATE PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND SKILLS BUILDING. IN MANY HIGHLY STRESSFUL PROFESSIONS OTHER THAN VETERINARY MEDICINE,

BECOMING TRAUMA-INFORMED NORMALIZES THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENTS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND PROVIDES UNDERSTANDING ON HOW TO BE BETTER PREPARED AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS TEAMS.

THE (6) PILLARS TO THIS FRAMEWORK INCLUDE:

- SAFETY (INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY)
- TRUSTWORTHINESS/TRANSPARENCY
- PEER SUPPORT
- COLLABORATION/MUTUALITY
- EMPOWERMENT/VOICE/CHOICE
- CULTURAL COMPETENCY.

THIS PRESENTATION WILL PROVIDE ATTENDEES WITH A FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING BEING TRAUMA-INFORMED AS EACH OF THESE (6) PILLARS ARE DISCUSSED AND MADE RELEVANT TO OUR VETERINARY SPACES. INITIAL SKILL-BUILDING AND APPROACHES WILL BE SHARED TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND INCREASE STRESS-REGULATION CAPACITY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNER SO THAT THEY CAN THEN BRING THESE CONCEPTS TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLES, TEAMS, AND WORK ENVIRONMENTS.



DAY 5 CONTINUED

NAVIGATING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AN ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK

BOUNDARIES ARE ESSENTIAL WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTHY AND CONNECTED INDIVIDUALS, TEAMS AND CULTURE. SO WHY ARE THEY SO HARD? IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL DISCUSS SOME OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND REASONS WHY HEALTHY BOUNDARY CREATION AND ARTICULATION FOR ONESELF AND FOR VETERINARY CAREGIVING TEAMS CAN BE CHALLENGING. THE GOAL IS TO DEVELOP A MORE FUNDAMENTAL UNDERSTANDING OF SOME OF THE POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO BOUNDARY CREATION, TO EXAMINE AND THEN TO PRACTICE MORE SKILLFUL ARTICULATION AROUND OUR BOUNDARIES, AND THEN HOW TO DEVELOP A CULTURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND COMPASSION THAT UPHOLDS BOUNDARIES. THE INTENTION IS TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN COLLECTIVE AWARENESS OF HOW HEALTHY BOUNDARIES CAN FOSTER SUSTAINABLE WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCY FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FOR TEAMS SUPPORTING HOLISTIC THRIVING.

IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL:

1. CONSIDER AND DISCUSS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS OF HAVING, AND NOT HAVING, HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS TEAM.
2. EXAMINE AND EXPLORE POTENTIAL PERSONAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS THAT MAY INTERFERE WITH DISCERNING AND CREATING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES.
3. IDENTIFY AND DEMONSTRATE TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES THAT CAN BE PRACTICED WHEN ATTEMPTING TO ARTICULATE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES IN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS.

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ROUTLEDGE PUBLISHERS



DAY 6

INTRODUCTION TO TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR SELF CARE

IN THIS INTRODUCTION TO TCM WE WILL LOOK AT THE 5 BRANCHES OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE AND EXPLORE THE DIFFERENT MODALITIES AND HOW TO INCORPORATE THEM INTO A SELF CARE PRACTICE. THE SESSION INCLUDES ACUPUNCTURE, FOOD THERAPY BASED ON FIVE ELEMENTS THEORY AND YIN/YANG PRINCIPLES, TUI-NA THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE TECHNIQUES AS WELL AS MOVEMENT AND MEDITATION PRACTICES SUCH AS TAI-CHI OR YOGA. WE WILL ALSO EXPLORE COMMON WESTERN AND EASTERN SUPPLEMENTS AS WELL AS ESSENTIAL OILS FOR WELLBEING.

NOTE: BASIC ACUPUNCTURE AND ACUPRESSURE TECHNIQUES WILL BE THE FOCUS W/DR. GALINA BERSHTEYN



**DAY 6
CONTINUED**

MINDFULNESS PRACTICES: INTELLIGENT EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EQUANIMITY AND RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

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ADDITIONAL SERVICES

FEBRUARY 11-17 2024
PURA VIDA RETREAT

COUNSELLING



Dr. Jamie Stahl

As a therapist, teacher, mentor, and former veterinarian I support and encourage you in embodying and expressing your inner truths, desires and living whole-heartedly. I practice the healing ways of the ancient somatic (body) traditions with a body-centered psychotherapy approach to reveal the wisdom of the heart and to return to the endless source of love within. This embodiment of love and awareness offers a way to alleviate suffering, deepen relationships, and create a meaningful life that we most long and yearn for.

15 MINUTE CONSULT: FREE