

Care-full Stories: Instructions for facilitators

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Introduction to Care-full Stories

This resource is one component of a wider effort across animal research facilities to nurture a good culture of care. This resource focuses at the level of personal interactions and collaborative working (how staff can care for and about each other), but also thinks through the implications of these for animal care and welfare, and how these values may become embedded in broader institutional cultures. It is ideally suited to groups of six-eight participants, but could be used with larger groups (with provision for break-out discussion) or smaller groups (suggested minimum four people plus facilitator).

The workshop is designed around asking participants to perform one or more story scripts, inspired by stories collected from those working in animal research. The object of the exercise is to help participants put themselves in someone else's shoes, and to understand how different people within a facility may have different ideas about, and approaches to, cultures of care.

Each story script is designed to help participants reflect on one or more of the learning outcomes below, and after the performance the facilitator leads the group through a series of questions for discussion, designed to help draw out the associated learning points. In discussion participants should be encouraged to share their own stories and experiences, as these are arguably the best resource for reflecting on their particular institution's culture of care.

Intended learning outcomes

After completing this workshop, participants should be able to:

- appreciate that there are *different kinds and understandings of care for both humans and animals within a facility*
- share examples of a *positive workplace culture* and think about how this could be further developed
- be aware that there can be *shared responsibility* (without loss of individual responsibility) towards animal care, welfare and use
- understand how they can promote *effective communication* between different roles within the animal unit
- consider examples of *(un)empowered care staff and veterinarians*, and provide suggestions to help make people comfortable about speaking out and sharing their concerns



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- encourage *respect for different roles, people and priorities within a research facility*
- recognise the *emotional division of labour* within animal research facilities, and the implications of this for their and their colleagues' wellbeing

When to use this resource

This resource can be run as a stand-alone two-to-three-hour workshop within an establishment as part of a wider strategy to embed a culture of care, used with a particular group (e.g. as part of a team meeting) where a deeper discussion of culture of care may be welcome, undertaken as part of Continuing Professional Development or incorporated into existing training programmes (such as license holder training or induction programmes for new members of staff).

Who should facilitate this resource?

This resource is designed to encourage participants and reflect on their own experiences and share these with each other. The facilitator plays a key role in generating discussion after each script, drawing out responses and throwing in questions. They should try and focus discussion around the intended learning outcomes for each script (see summary below), whilst also allowing people space to share their stories and experiences and encouraging balanced participation. The facilitator should be someone comfortable with leading group discussions and tackling some of the issues and potential conflicts that arise between different roles working in an animal research facility. They should also be prepared to support anyone with communication issues, providing a safe space and one which is as far as possible accessible to all those working in animal research, regardless of role. Someone with training experience would be ideal. For the space of the workshop the facilitator should adopt a neutral perspective; their role is to facilitate discussion, not lead it! Some of the issues discussed can be sensitive and people may become emotional or upset. Such reactions usually reflect a "normal" response to distressing issues. For the most part the facilitator can help just by acknowledging the normality of those responses, however, it is a good idea to set aside another room or private space where people can take a break if they need to and rejoin the discussion when they are ready.

How to use this resource

This suggested plan is for a two-to-three-hour workshop, but there is scope to adapt this to longer / shorter time frames by selecting to work with only one of the scripts. The resource is designed to be adapted to your needs, and by selecting particular scripts or versions you can tailor the workshop to focus on particular audiences or learning outcomes (see notes below).



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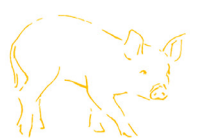


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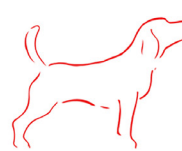


Before your workshop

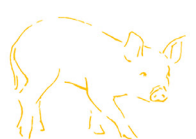
Choose your audience and priority learning outcomes:

The resource can be adapted to stress different elements of a culture of care and to suit different audiences by selecting particular scripts or versions of the scripts. Before using the resource, you will need to reflect on the participants in your workshop and if there are particular learning outcomes you wish to focus on. At the beginning of each script is a summary of the learning outcomes. There are seven different scripts to choose from:

Script	Format	Purpose	Potential audiences
<p>Story 1: Keep on labouring</p> <p>Note: This script is also available in French and Spanish.</p>	<p>Duologue</p> <p>A conversation between two researchers, one of whom (A) has line management responsibilities for the other (B).</p>	<p>Highlight issues around workplace environment and hierarchy; institutional behaviour and division; respect for different roles.</p>	<p>This would work well with mixed groups of animal technologists, named veterinary surgeons, licence holders, managers and researchers (although perhaps not inexperienced project licence holders) as well as groups who need to understand the different roles and responsibilities within a facility (e.g. lay members of ethical review bodies)</p>
<p>Story 2: Do we care?</p> <p>Note: This script has 2 versions, one featuring NHPs and one featuring a mouse model</p>	<p>Three parallel monologues read alongside each other</p> <p>There are three roles (animal technologist, researcher and named veterinary surgeon).</p>	<p>Highlight issues for discussion around: different kinds of care, lack of communication, empowerment to speak up.</p>	<p>This would work well with mixed groups of animal technologists, named veterinary surgeons, graduate students, licence holders, managers and researchers. This story is also particularly suited to new project licence holders.</p>



Script	Format	Purpose	Potential audiences
<p>Story 3: Just me now</p> <p>Note: This script is harder to run online.</p>	<p>This script takes the form of an interactive role play</p> <p>The lead role (an animal technologist) makes a series of decisions as they move through the script. Each decision brings them into dialogue with another character (a fellow animal technologist, the named veterinary surgeon, the licence holder), who then chooses an envelope which contains their script for what happens next. Multiple options highlight the different ways in which this scenario may play out.</p>	<p>Highlight issues for discussion around: empowerment, individual and collective responsibility, effective communication.</p>	<p>This one could be good to use with new project license holders to highlight the need for good communication with the wider team around endpoint decisions, as well as with mixed groups as above. It would also be well suited for more inexperienced researchers.</p>
<p>Story 4: Not just the two of us</p>	<p>Duologue</p> <p>A conversation between two early career researchers outside the room where the ethical review body meeting (AWERB) takes place. One researcher has just left the meeting, another is about to go in.</p>	<p>To explore the conflicting pressures that exist for early career researchers as well as institutional differences that have an impact on their work.</p>	<p>Particularly designed to highlight the challenges faced by junior researchers due to pressures such as short-term contracts and journal and funding deadlines. Could also be useful for those going up before / joining the ethical review body (AWERB) for the first time.</p>
<p>Story 5: Under pressure</p> <p>Note: This script is also available in French and Spanish.</p>	<p>Duologue</p> <p>An email exchange between an animal technologist and their line manager.</p>	<p>To explore the pressures created by the pandemic as well as pressures related to being part of a more isolated group within a facility, such as a team focused on breeding.</p>	<p>Good for highlighting the need for good communication between those occupying different roles and at different levels of seniority.</p>
<p>Story 6: Wild thing</p>	<p>Dualogue</p> <p>A conversation between two friends meeting in a café. One works with animals in the wild, the other is lab-based.</p>	<p>To explore the complications around translating care for animals in the lab to a wildlife context; the cultural, institutional, and international differences that play a role in that; how welfare is measured differently.</p>	<p>Useful for researchers and ethical review body members looking to explore the distinctive challenges raised by research outside of the laboratory / at places other than licenced establishments.</p>



Script	Format	Purpose	Potential audiences
Story 7: Who is it all for?	<p>This scene takes place in a seminar room in a research facility</p> <p>It is set immediately after a group of people affected by a health condition have been on a tour to see the zebrafish. The tour was led by the event organiser and the Head of Project. The animal technician who spoke to people about their work and care for the fish had just stepped in for a colleague. They are getting together at the end to chat and exchange questions.</p>	<p>Patient and public engagement and involvement can play an important role in shaping the funding and the relevance of animal research, but it needs to be carefully planned from an early stage, as this script illustrates.</p>	<p>This script is useful for animal research facilities planning public engagement tours and other related activities.</p>

Familiarise yourself with your chosen scripts:

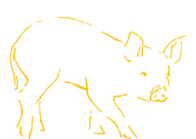
Think about the different roles available and have a list of the performers needed for each script so you can ask for volunteers or allocate roles at the start of the workshop (or even beforehand). Make sure you have enough copies and the right versions of each script for each role. Also take a look at the ice-breaker exercises, and select one or more to use at the start of your workshop.

Think about the setting:

The space you use needs to help create a relaxed and small group feel; too large and it's hard to create the kind of friendly, intimate environment needed for difficult or emotional conversations, too small and people may feel uncomfortable. Read through the stage directions for each script and make sure you have relevant props to hand and enough space for performers to move around. You may also wish to have a flip-pad, whiteboard or Post-its and pens to hand to help record feedback at the end of each discussion session, and pens with paper and clipboards for some of the warm-up activities. Think about where you will sit and stand; will you be able to see everyone in the room? If working online, familiarise yourself with the relevant software – (something like Zoom or Teams can work well) – and think through meeting protocols (such as asking people to mute when not speaking) and how participants will raise your attention if they need to speak.



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If you can, also think about the timing of your event; when are your audience most likely to be open to discussion and reflection? For example, an early afternoon slot might work better than first thing on a Monday morning. Think about accessibility. Is there anyone who may not be able to hear well, for example, or who is a non-native speaker, and who may like a copy of the script to read along?

Think about how you will support someone if the conversation becomes difficult or they get upset:

Is there a room where you can take them aside and give them time to collect themselves? Are there support (e.g. counselling) services you can refer them on to afterwards if needed?

Think about how you will handle people getting defensive or confrontational:

How will you set the space up so it is accepting and inclusive? When creating a safe space (see below) think about how you will also create an inclusive one.

Plan evaluation:

As part of the resource pack we've included a sample feedback survey to use with participants. Please feel free to adapt / tailor this to your needs.



Agenda on the day

1. Outline the objectives of the training exercise

(10 minutes)

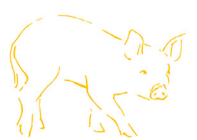
Explain the context for the workshop: A good culture of care has become a key aspect of the regulation of animal research, but it is also something more widely recognised as central to both staff and animal wellbeing. This training exercise has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and aims to encourage discussion about, and reflection on, a number of elements which have been identified as key to developing and sustaining a strong culture of care within an animal research facility.

Learning outcomes – after completing this workshop, participants should be able to:

- appreciate that there are different kinds and understandings of care for both humans and animals within a facility,
- share examples of a positive workplace culture and think about how this could be further developed
- be aware that there can be shared responsibility (without loss of individual responsibility) towards animal care, welfare and use;
- understand how they can promote effective communication between different roles within the animal unit;
- consider examples of (un)empowered care staff and veterinarians, and provide suggestions to help make people comfortable about speaking out and sharing their concerns
- encourage respect for different roles, people and priorities within a research facility
- recognise the emotional division of labour within animal research facilities, and the implications of this for their and their colleagues' wellbeing



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Note: depending on the group you are working with you may want to focus on some of these learning outcomes more than others.

For example, for project licence holders, already aware of the different conflicts / pressures, the scripts can help to remind them of how it feels to be someone else. For early career researchers and animal care staff, the scripts can help better recognise the competing pressures and priorities which may influence the responses of those they work with. For lay members of ethical review bodies, the scripts can help them understand the different roles, responsibilities and pressures within a facility. Against each script summary (see above) we provide some suggestions as to how that script might be used to promote specific learning outcomes for specific audiences.

2. Outline the shape of the session

(5 minutes)

Explain what will happen in the workshop:

In this workshop we will perform a series of story scripts, inspired by stories collected from those working in animal research. We'll be asking some of you play the roles of characters in the story. You are not expected to be a professional performer. The object of the exercise is to help you and those around you put yourselves in someone else's shoes, and to understand how different people within a facility may have different ideas about, and approaches to, cultures of care.*

Each story is designed to help you reflect on one or more of the learning outcomes above, and after each story we will pause to reflect on the learning outcomes, working through a series of questions for discussion. At this point we would really encourage you to share your own stories and experiences, as these are arguably the best resource for reflecting on your own particular institution's culture of care.

- * **Note to facilitator:** It works best if people play roles different to those they usually adopt in real life, as the aim of the exercise is to get people to respect different roles within animal research and the pressures different people are under.



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3. Create a safe space

(10 minutes)

Facilitator reads out the following or similar words:

The aim of this workshop is to create a safe space for people to discuss some of the challenges they face in their workplace. Some of the scenarios we explore, or some of the things you may want to share, may make you feel uncomfortable or conflicted. Remember the aim of this session is to share experiences and support each other, not to pass judgement. There are no wrong responses or answers. Therefore, for the space of three hours, we'll adopt our own version of 'Chatham House Rules'. You are welcome, and indeed encouraged to share some of the themes and ideas generated from your time here after the workshop, but please do not share any specific information about those present or who said what about whom. If you need to step outside to take a break at any time, this is fine. Just let the facilitator know.

You may wish to use a flip chart, whiteboard or similar to solicit and agree a short list of shared rules for the workshop, or create a slide showing the rules outlined above and ask if there is anything people would like to add.

4. Warm up

(20 minutes)

Ice-breaking exercises (see Introductory activities):

Use one or more of the ice-breaking exercises in order to (a) introduce everyone to each other if they have not met before and (b) begin to create a more relaxed atmosphere amongst the group. This is particularly important if the group has not met before. If your group know each other well you may only need to use one of these. If the group is new to each other using a few more may help create a more relaxed feel. If you are running the workshop online some of the ice-breakers may work better than others (see notes on resource).



5. Perform your chosen scripts

(30 to 40 minutes per script including discussion time, plus a 15 minute break)

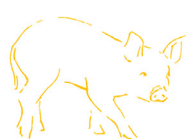
At the start of each performance **make sure you have the space set up** as per stage instructions, and while you are doing this hand out the scripts so participants can familiarise themselves with their roles.

Describe the setting for the script and the main characters. Invite your performers to read out your chosen script and then facilitate a discussion based on the questions provided (note the suggested time allocations for each script and discussion). The questions for discussion are intended to draw out the key learning points for each script, and to encourage participants to share their own stories. Depending on the size of your group and how comfortable they are with each other, it may help to divide participants into small groups after each script and ask them to work through the questions before feeding back. You could record feedback on a whiteboard / Post-its / flipchart.

In some cases, you may find individuals strongly disagree with or challenge the scenarios presented, or feel the example is a slight personal attack / stereotype. If this happens remind the individual these are fictional scenarios, and that the characters are exaggerated to generate discussion. Ask them why they feel that way and invite them to share their own story of how things might play out differently. Ask them what their story can tell us about the culture of care where they work, reminding them to avoid naming specific individuals.

It may also be the case that people become uncomfortable as a result of the turn discussion takes or the actions of someone else in the group. Ideally, the work taken to create a safe and relaxed space will act to mitigate this, but be prepared to call a five minute 'comfort' break to give people the chance to step back and/or leave for a period if they become upset or distressed. You may even want to create a designated quiet space people can retreat to if needed. Direct messages and camera off options can facilitate a similar move in an online scenario.

These kinds of conversation can be demanding, so make sure you **schedule a break**. Offline this is a good opportunity for casual conversations. Online its essential to give people a chance to detach from the screen and take a walk around.



6. Reflection and feeding-forward

(10 minutes)

Remind participants of the key learning outcomes:

In person:

Ask each participant to complete two short postcards (paper). The first one (to themselves) should reflect on one thing they've learnt that they think will change the way they approach their work in the future. The facilitator should post these back to participants (perhaps using internal mail) three months after the activity. The second postcard (participants should not sign their name on these and should remain anonymous) will describe one thing they learned that they might use to promote a culture of care within their facility. These postcards could be pinned to a shared resource/space (e.g. staff notice board) to share amongst colleagues.

Online:

We used the online whiteboard tool Jamboard which participants could use to post virtual post-it notes to respond to three questions (see example below). Screenshots of the completed Jamboards were then shared as a take-away from the event.



Example online whiteboard used for discussion and reflection on key take-aways.

Thank everyone for their participation and remind them of the agreement not to share any specific information about those present or who said what about whom/where.



7. Think about next steps

(10 minutes)

Think about how you might follow up on what's been discussed. Could your institution do more to support a culture of care? Here's some useful resources to get you started ...

- European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations' Research and Animal Welfare's assessing and benchmarking framework for reviewing your institution's culture of care: www.efpia.eu/media/413469/assessing-and-benchmarking-culture-of-care-in-the-context-of-using-animals-for-scientific-purpose.pdf
- Norecopa's Culture of Care resource site has a mixture of resources and links, including a useful poster promoting communication between researchers and animal technologists: norecopa.no/more-resources/culture-of-care
- This piece by Marylin Brown from Charles River offers some practical tips on developing a culture of care: www.nc3rs.org.uk/news/creating-culture-care
- Sally Robinson and colleagues offer some useful advice on promoting a learning culture in this paper: *Improving culture of care through maximising learning from observations and events: Addressing what is at fault*, doi: [10.1177/00236772211037177](https://doi.org/10.1177/00236772211037177)
- North American 3Rs Collaborative has a resource hub with lots of materials geared towards improving wellbeing and tackling compassion fatigue: www.na3rsc.org/compassion-fatigue/



8. Feedback survey

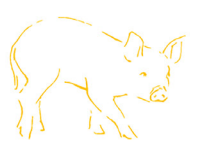
(10 minutes)

Before you go, we'd like to ask you a few quick questions to help us further develop and improve this resource:

1. What did you enjoy about this session?
2. Was there anything you did not enjoy?
3. Have you received other training on the 'Culture of Care', and if so, how does this exercise compare to other training you have received?
4. Do you feel participating in this activity has given you new insights into Culture of Care?
5. Is there anything you might take from today's discussions you might use to promote the Culture of Care in your workplace?
6. A key aim of these exercises has been to encourage people working in very different roles within an animal research facility to see things from a different perspective – do you think it achieved this aim?
7. Is there anything you would change about today's exercise?
8. What support or resources would you like to help build a strong culture of care at your workplace?
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



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End of workshop

Follow up survey

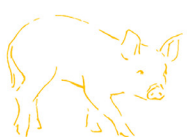
(after three months)

Use this short survey to see if the workshop has had lasting impact:

Three months ago, you participated in our Care-full Stories workshop. We'd like to understand how this exercise has impacted your day-to-day working. We would be grateful if you could complete this short follow-up survey:

1. Can you name one thing you remember from your Care-full Stories experience?
2. Has completing the training workshop changed the way you think about your work, and those who work around you?
3. Over the last three months have you done anything differently as a result of taking part in Care-full Stories?
4. Would you recommend this workshop to a colleague, and if so, why?

Once you have received the survey responses, remember to send out the postcards that participants wrote to themselves at the end of the workshop.



Acknowledgements

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