

Care-full stories: Story 1: Keep labouring

November 2022



Set up

Setting:

This story is a conversation between two researchers, one of whom (**A**) has line management responsibility for the other (**B**). It is set in Researcher A's office.

Set up:

Two people to read a duologue.

In person:

Place two chairs facing away from each other at separate points in the room. A sits on one chair, B stands some distance away.

Online:

Simply read, while also looking at the other character whenever you want (*ignore stage directions that require movement*).

Characters:

- A. Research Scientist and Line Manager
- B. Research Scientist

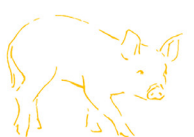
Aims:

This story is meant to highlight issues for discussion around:

- workplace environment
- institutional behaviour and division of labour
- respect.



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Script

B: Can I come in?

A: Of course. Come in, take a seat!

(B "enters" and goes to second chair. Stands, sits, moves around the room at any point they choose. A can also choose to stand or sit at any point)

B: Thanks.

A: Are you all right?

B: It's been a rough weekend, actually. I lost my colony of mice. All of them. There was a disease breakout...

A: Oh no! I wondered why you weren't at the monthly 3Rs meeting. Absolutely understand, of course. Noticed you, Jenny and Peter were all missing.

B: Who?

A: Jenny and Peter.

(B doesn't reply. Shakes their head)

A: Your Animal Techs? Working with you this weekend? Been working with you since the start of your recent project?

B: Right.

A: They're great aren't they? Very meticulous. I trust them thoroughly with my own colonies.

B: Yes.

A: Look, I know now might not be the time but there's a bit of talk going around about your interaction with some of the –

B: *(Interrupts)* You're right, now is not the time. I have a huge issue right now and making sure Jenny and Peter like me is not really top of my priority list.

A: They work very hard for you. And me.

B: Right now I am under huge time and budget pressures. I don't want to bore you with the details but, as my friend and in your official position as my line manager, I need your help. I need to get this new colony in and ready ASAP. It's a really short project and with these delays the pressure is just piling on.

A: So what do you need?



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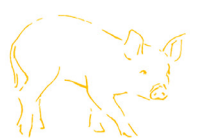


- B:** Well, I need your help to get things through and started quickly. The Animal Techs and the Named Vet want to make changes and review and discuss the care plans. And we just don't have that kind of time. I need you to help me just get this colony in and get me started.
- A:** Presumably they are just trying to make sure this colony is fine and well taken care of, which helps you, doesn't it?
- B:** We are fully compliant. They are taking it too far; we need to just get on.
- A:** Were you there?
- B:** Where?
- A:** When they had to euthanise your last colony?
- B:** No, of course not. I had other work to do. You can't expect me to be there every time. Would you be?
- A:** Not every time no, but I'd try to be present or at least aware. It's not fair for only the Animal Techs to have to deal with that side of things. Especially when they are our animals. And if they're just trying to avoid it happening again, then good.
- B:** It won't happen again.
- A:** I also know they've had a lot of complicated things happening over the last couple of weeks with various groups. Jenny even cancelled her long overdue holiday.
- B:** So you won't help me? I'm really stressed; I just need some support here. And I don't feel I should be dictated to by the Animal Techs about how I do my work.
- A:** They are not dictating.
- B:** No? I follow their ideas, I get more delayed and everything falls apart. I don't and I get a reputation – or more of one, apparently.
- A:** I don't really know what I can do here.
- B:** Well, neither do I!
- A:** Clearly everyone is upset and stressed for various reasons. Maybe you should....
- B:** What?
- A:** I don't know.
- B:** No, I don't know either.
- A:** I just feel...
- B:** I just feel...

end of script



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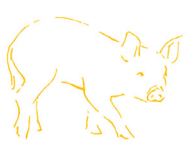
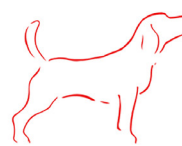


Questions for discussion

1. How does each person in this scenario feel?
2. What are your similar experiences? Would you like to share any?
3. How should it be resolved?
4. Who should be involved in the conversation?
5. What, if any, other questions are raised for you in this scenario?



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Acknowledgements

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