



A CULTURE OF CARE: INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN WELLBEING IN ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

By

¹Sabrina Brando

¹ AnimalConcepts, Spain

Sabrina Brando
sbrando@animalconcepts.eu

ABSTRACT

SDGs 2-3-4-6-12-13-14-15-16

Word count

A culture of care involves attention to psychological wellbeing by creating healthy and safe workspaces from a physical and psychological perspective. It requires considering different dimensions influencing human wellbeing such as the environment, social, and financial aspects, and includes conducting risk and resilience assessments at individual, leadership and organisational levels. While a culture of care encompasses all staff, this presentation focusses on animal care professional specifically and the benefits of taking an interdisciplinary approach. Organisations and individuals across different disciplines, such as zoos, aquariums, laboratories, shelters, and sanctuaries, can learn from one another and provide support when dealing with the satisfactions (joys) and occupational stressors (sorrows) of their work. There are commonalities amongst the joys, e.g., supporting good animal wellbeing, the connection with the animals, species conservation, connecting to the public, animal and environmental protection, research and education and the sorrows which may include extended workloads, dysfunctional teams, limited time and budgets, grief, loss, and euthanasia. While differences between the professions exist, there are also large overlaps grounded in common humanity. The knowledge that we are not alone, that we have a larger support network, that life is all about relationships and connections and that we can find support and strength in each other unites us. Love, care and empathy in the workplace revolves around a sense of belonging, feeling seen and respected, supported and cared for. Anwar et al. (2021), propose in "Love as a Business Strategy: Resilience, Belonging and Success" that it boils down to a culture without fear. In which people are rooting for each other's growth, where ideas and concerns are valued, where mistakes are treated as learnings, there is support in affronting new things, our weaknesses are supported by other's strengths, and leaders share their mistakes and vulnerability too. A deep culture of care considers human wellbeing at an individual, leadership, and organisational level and recognises that every work environment is an ecosystem of systems, where actors interact with other actors for a common purpose e.g., providing excellence in animal care, saving species, rescuing animals, or protecting wild spaces. Articulating what the common purpose or purposes are, reflects a Systems Thinking (Saraph, 2021) approach and that everyone and everything is interconnected. What all people need most is to feel loved (Baer, 2011). Today a deep and true culture of care and understanding is about *real love* in the workplace.

Keywords: human wellbeing, individual, organisational, leadership, culture of care, belonging, love, respect, systems thinking, Rijnlands organisation

**ZAA
2022**



8 - 11 August 2022 • Melbourne Zoo
inspiring sustainability action
HYBRID CONFERENCE & WORKSHOPS

**ZOO
AQUARIUM**
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALASIA

**ZOOS
VICTORIA**
Fighting Extinction

BIOGRAPHY (121)

Sabrina Brando is the founder of AnimalConcepts, which includes the online interconnected platforms *Practical Animal Welfare Science* (animal), *One Care* (human), and the *Earth Charter – SDGs* (planetary). Via these continued professional development platforms individuals and organisations can be changemakers together. She pursues a PhD at the University of Stirling in Scotland on human wellbeing in animal care and conservation professions and is a Research Associate with the Smithsonian Institution. AnimalConcepts has been a proud Earth Charter International Partner since 2020, combining the Earth Charter with the SDGs to guide AnimalConcepts' philosophy, strategy, and actions. Sabrina is a published author, storyteller, and sought-after thought leader, collaborating with zoos, aquariums, sanctuaries, research, and other organisations across disciplines, a frequent invited speaker and researcher.