



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Dealing with Burnout in Animal Rescuers using Stress Inoculation Training**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the research revolved around understanding signs of burnout within the population of animal rescuers in Karachi. Stress inoculation training was provided to these rescuers to equip them with skills to help navigate emotional strain due to their rescue work. Within the context of Karachi, animal rescuers are commonly exposed to negative consequences such as animal abuse, neglect, and cruelty which in turn lead to increased risk for burnout and stress (Jacobs & Reese, 2021). Their experiences were hence observed through a specific lens utilizing the Job Demands-Resources model and Burnout dimensions provided by Maslach. The research followed a qualitative design, where training was provided to 30 participants recruited through snowball sampling. Various themes emerged from semi-structured interviews, revealing workload, guilt, emotional exhaustion, support factors, and stress amongst more. Training allowed participants to gain insight, and results suggested that grounding techniques and self-regulation lead to reduction in burnout.

**KEYWORDS** Stress, Burnout, CBT, Training, Animal Rescuers, Animal Rights

**Introduction**

Defining animal rescue in layman terms simply refers to efforts either on organizational, or individual level that prioritize saving, protecting, and attempting to treat and rehabilitate animals. The criterion for animals commonly involves those that are injured or abused, neglected or abandoned, and are under immediate threat. The process of rescuing itself includes responding to emergency reports which are usually made by residents within various areas of the city. Animal rescuers are hence required to urgently respond, and follow protocol of picking up the respective animal, identifying nature of abuse / injury, and providing relevant treatment, relocation, or shelter services whichever may be required during the time. Animal rescuers may either work independently, as volunteers or under welfare organizations. In Karachi, due to low-resource availability, most rescuers are forced to work independently, within their own limited capacity. The rescuers often function as a result of filling gaps left by inadequate governmental animal welfare policies (Anthony & De Paula Vieira, 2022). Agents of Animal Welfare in given literature have been defined as “individuals who care for animals and work to protect them, which includes employees and volunteers in animal shelters or rescues, animal welfare, and animal rights” (Fournier & Mustful, 2019).

The scope of animal rescue also includes advocacy for animal rights, raising awareness of ethical treatment, and promoting sterilization or vaccination drives to prevent overpopulation and disease (Bekoff, 2024). In developing countries, where animal welfare laws are either underdeveloped or poorly enforced, rescuers are often

exposed to extreme levels of burnout, making the field not only emotionally taxing but also psychologically demanding.

In this context it is important to note that animal rescuers in Karachi, Pakistan are repeatedly exposed to traumatic events involving injured, abused, or dying animals. Countrywide reports in Pakistan from private as well as registered organizations indicate a dismal picture wherein animal rescue organizations as well as rescuers face lack of infrastructural support, direct threats as well as apathy during their work on the streets (Chaudhry, 2025, Rana et al, 2025).

It is crucial to understand that public attitudes towards animal rescuers shift and vary based on cultural and socioeconomic contexts, which in turn impacts the resource availability and psychological burden they experience. Rescuers in Pakistan that are commonly working independently or within low resourced volunteer networks, mostly function in undervalued and isolated environments. Cultural beliefs surrounding animals further determine the community responses to animal rescue related work. In Pakistan, stray animals are commonly regarded as at risk of diseases and poisoned, abandoned or harmed rather than being given protection (Moosa, 2026). Such attitudes lead to limited public empathy towards rescuing efforts which pose risk of animal rescuers facing social stigma and alienation from society. Contextual elements further impact the ability of animal rescuers to be able to respond to signs of burnout.

Personal mental wellbeing often goes unnoticed whilst working within the field of animal rescue. The deterioration of health of the rescuer is often disregarded by themselves, due to priority and focus being shifted solely towards the animals in question. Though rescuers play a crucial role in the promotion of animal welfare, they are commonly alienated from society and face extreme levels of social and cultural stigma (Ilyas, 2023). Experiences pertaining to isolation hence results in this specific population of animal rescuers taking a step back, remaining hesitant to reach out for help, and hence being unable to voice their own needs further leading to mental health decline. Lack of structured support, withdrawal and isolation further exacerbate and intensify burnout and overall stress (Lev et al., 2022).

## **Literature Review**

International research reports that individuals in these caregiving roles i.e. animal welfare professionals specifically, veterinarians, shelter workers, and rehabilitation workers, face increased risk regarding burnout and stress (Crane et al., 2023). Upon international grounds, animal welfare organizations are notably required to now integrate various steps to provide debriefings, relevant training and counseling catered to the needs within animal rescue and care settings.

Animal welfare is a concept that commonly remains neglected within community settings, and country-wide policy-making areas (Kellner, 2025). Due to lack of governmental intervention and accountability, the responsibility of rescue-related work remains upon individual animal rescuers, further increasing overtime. In Pakistan, the crisis remains ever growing in the context of animal overpopulation and cruelty, lack of financial resources and poor veterinary access (Hasan, 2023). Due to these compounding factors, animal rescuers are forced to operate in extreme, unsupportive, under-resourced, and psychologically threatening environments. When compared with rural areas, these challenges are further exacerbated by limited transportation, poor veterinary and community outreach, and deeply embedded socio-cultural stigmas against animals.

Accounts of animal abuse and neglect can commonly be noted as cases which animal rescuers are exposed to on a routine basis. Due to the passion and commitment which animal rescuers hold, an adverse impact of such a voluntary field is the exposure towards horrific abuse and cruelty as a consequence, and on a recurring basis (Murphy & Daly, 2020). Animal rescuers, especially those working in collaboration with organizations and shelters also need to make tough decisions on a day to day basis, such as that of euthanasia. These instances result in concept of “caring-killing paradox”, consequently leading towards moral depletion and emotional strain. Euthanasia allows shelters to weigh overpopulation and make space for other rescued cases which may require urgent treatment due to the severity of injuries, neglect and abuse. Further, such actions inevitably contribute towards occupational stress, low job satisfaction and ultimately guilt, grief, helplessness and frustration which contribute towards burnout. Studies have also demonstrated that chronic exposure to animal suffering impacts cognitive-emotional functioning, often resulting in empathy overload, emotional numbness, anxiety, and depression (Stevenson & Morales, 2022).

Animal rescuers, in response to low satisfaction levels and burnout often tend to display certain coping skills in order to retain consistency and performance in the field. In a review article, *Social Workers in Animal Shelters: A Strategy Toward Reducing Occupational Stress Among Animal Shelter Workers*, emphasis was laid on animal shelter workers (ASWs) being routinely exposed to animal suffering, neglect, and euthanasia, placing them at heightened risk (Hoy-Gerlach et al., 2021). Animal rescuers are often faced with conflicting ideas, where their motivation and drive stems from factors such as empathy and purpose, but is immediately challenged by life-and-death decisions regarding the animals they rescue.

Abovementioned study applies the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which offers a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how excessive emotional demands (e.g., trauma, grief) lead to burnout when job resources (e.g., social support, recognition, autonomy) are lacking.

Qualitative research variables on trauma-exposed animal rescuers can be conceptualized within the single framework in the literature utilizing the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model of Burnout by Demerouti et al. (2001, (one of the most widely cited burnout models in occupational psychology) that integrates burnout, stress exposure, and environmental factors. This model explains how high demands + low resources lead to burnout, (including symptoms of trauma exposure, lack of resources, financial strain, social isolation). Burnout outcomes within the JD-R model have been further conceptualized using Burnout dimensions by Maslach et al (2011).

The Maslach et al (2016) components (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced accomplishment) are embedded within the JD-R outcomes for this research analysis, thus creating avenues for the interpretation of burnout.

It is relevant to note that protective factors, such as peer support, organizational validation, and empathy regulation, can mitigate these effects and enhance psychological resilience (Paul et al., 2023). Further protective factors have been identified that buffer the psychological impact. A strong sense of meaning in their work, social support from peers, perceived compassion satisfaction, and a deep bond with the animals in their care have been shown to foster resilience among ASWs (Hoy-Gerlach et al., 2021). Additionally, increased live release rates (LRR) and institutional support can contribute to job satisfaction and mitigate feelings of helplessness.

In relation to provided literature, the present research emphasized the significance of targeted interventions that follow procedural methods to address Negative Thought Patterns (NATs) and provide animal rescuers relevant grounding tools. These tools can be utilized in accordance with the framework of The Cognitive Triad to understand and shift perception regarding job satisfaction i.e. in this case animal rescue related work and further provide appropriate and healthy coping mechanisms. The framework and structure of the triad was first introduced in light of Aaron Beck's cognitive theory in 1979. He viewed maladaptive thought patterns as those ideas that are predominantly a result of three major categories: (i) Views about the world, (ii) Views about oneself, and (iii) Views about the future (Qureshi, 2024). The applicability of this framework proves to be significant for the research as it allows understanding how animal rescuers view their environment and create relevant associations regarding their field of work. As mentioned in literature provided, in the context of Pakistan, cultural stigma plays a significant role in shaping the views of each individual rescuer. Due to lack of governmental and institutional, and community level intervention and engagement, rescuers are likely to form negative world views as well as views regarding self, as can also be seen by the results of this research on burnout and stress inoculation training.

## Material and Methods

The research utilizes qualitative control to extract relevant themes from in-depth interviews to better understand the experiences of animal rescuers in Karachi. Further, targeted stress inoculation training was applied within the duration of three sessions which was inclusive of interviews, assessing burnout through reflections, and facilitating the animal rescuers by training to equip them with grounding and anchoring techniques, and modifying perception through discussion of repetitive negative thought patterns. participants were approached via animal welfare organizations, rescue networks, and social media communities.

**Participants:** 30 adult animal rescuers from different areas of Karachi participated in the stress inoculation training.

**Sampling:** Snowball and purposive sampling was utilized for the purpose of recruitment of lesser-known independent rescuers across various regions. Outreach included digital flyers, NGO referrals, and word-of-mouth.

Inclusion criteria aimed to focus on the population of animal rescuers of ages 18 years or above and those that are currently active in animal rescue fieldwork, not limited to voluntary or professional. It further took into consideration the individual's willingness to participate in both intervention and pre and post assessments.

Informed Consent Form was used in order to debrief the individuals participating regarding the nature and purpose of the research. This allowed them to make an informed decision and understand their right to withdraw from the research at any given point in time without consequence.

A brief demographics form was used during the recruitment process to short-list those participants which will be part of the research under the given requirements. The form further took into consideration inclusion and exclusion criteria, in order to gather participants through snowball sampling.

## Procedure

The process was divided into three segments for methodological clarity including pre intervention interview, training intervention and finally post intervention debrief / interview. Pre and post analysis of participant's views on being able to deal effectively with their burnout were carried out through self rating and a debriefing interview based on the following model: Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model – Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli (2001) while Burnout outcomes were interpreted through Maslach Burnout Dimensions – Maslach & Jackson (1981); Maslach et al. (2001) . Details are given as follows:

*Pre intervention interview:* A structured Interview Guide was utilized to gather in-depth qualitative data from participants. The guide, designed to explore the lived experiences of animal rescuers, explored their life circumstances particularly in relation to emotional burden, repeated exposure, coping mechanisms, and resilience. The qualitative data provided thematic insight into how rescuers perceive and process signs of distress linked to burnout and their subsequent attitude change while dealing with burnout.

*Training Intervention:* Framework of the Cognitive Triad was utilized within the training session to psychoeducate the participants and understand, recognize and place their thought patterns in a structured manner.

The two-part training created the grounds for participant self-reflections pertaining to the significance of anchoring and grounding techniques, and facilitating the animal rescuers in learning how to apply them in their routine. Since the field of animal rescue is on-the-go, it was deemed necessary while designing the training based on the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy model, to equip individuals with techniques which are accessible and do not require additional time or resources to practice on the move.

Dual-sensory engagement was maintained throughout the training sessions; designed to activate awareness, bringing the participant into the present moment, and contributing toward the reduction of emotional flooding. It created a sense of physical stability and emotional regulation (Trehaan, 2025), enabling the participant to reconnect with their body and break dissociative thought cycles, which are commonly reported in cases of emotional overwhelm and burnout. Participants then identified their negative automatic thoughts (NATs) related to their animal rescue work (e.g., guilt, helplessness, and frustration). These NATs were written down and actively reframed through a technique "flipping the script," which involved consciously transforming unhelpful self-statements into empowering alternatives. This technique was central to the cognitive restructuring process and supported improved emotion regulation, increased perceived control, and resilience.

*Post intervention debrief interview:* The training session ended with a debrief and post intervention review for attitudes toward dealing with burnout and the development of a cognitive and behavioral action plan for the animal rescuers to be able to follow within their routine. The training/debrief intervention aimed at increasing coping awareness, boundary setting, and reflective processing. These were framed as attitudinal shifts rather than behavioural outcomes, which is apt for qualitative post-interview analysis.

**Table 1**  
**Training Intervention - Stress inoculation training framework**

| Session - 60 to 90 minutes per session   | Description  |
|--|--|
| In-depth interview   | Provided understanding of individual and personal animal rescue experiences  |
| Training Session I: Grounding  | Psychoeducating and using anchoring techniques / stress inoculation techniques to regroup and focus on the present.<br>Reframe and restructure cognitive distortions and negative thought patterns to overcome and change / modify views related to animal rescue within the context of burnout.   |
| Training Session II: Combatting NATs and Self regulation through boundary setting. | Animal rescuing can be an all-encompassing and demanding 24 hour job, which, while rewarding in itself for its intrinsic motivation, can deplete the inner physical and mental including emotional resources of the rescuer who is exposed to disease, death and pain management on a regular basis as supported by documentary evidence provided in the literature review.<br><br>In this context it was imperative for The training to focus self regulation through the Cognitive framework while encouraging boundary setting by way of allowing and giving themselves time to decompress. |

## Results and Discussion

Burnout is a factor which remains unnoticed due to the nature of the work of animal rescue and its requirement to remain vigilant and constantly active during fieldwork. Working a role which requires high emotional demands towards animals who are distressed, puts animal rescuers at high risk from experiencing such symptoms as they need take an empathetic and compassionate approach round the clock (Lloyd & Campion, 2017).

The external environment of the city of Karachi and its surroundings in which animal rescuers work, whether it be within an organization or privately in certain regions of the country, contributes towards mental deterioration. Due to lack of support systems and stigma around community integration, rescuers face the issue of being alienated from society. Literature review shows that in a country such as Pakistan, with poor policy-making regarding animal rights and welfare, rescuers have an additional role to further their movement and fight for the protection of animals across the country. The nature of the role makes it difficult for rescuers to take into consideration personal strategies which can allow them to remain grounded and distance themselves from their working role. Such strategies, with appropriate facilitation from professionals, may include change in lifestyle, monitored and reduced working hours, maintaining adequate sleep, shared responsibility delegation, and building up on personal qualities and strengths in order to maintain optimism.

**Table 2**  
**Frequency and percentages of Demographic Variables of Animal Rescuer Participants (N=30)**

| Variables | f | %    |
|-----------|---|------|
| Age       | 1 | 3.3  |
| 19        | 1 | 3.3  |
| 20        | 1 | 3.3  |
| 21        | 2 | 6.7  |
| 24        | 8 | 26.7 |
| 25        | 5 | 16.7 |
| 26        | 3 | 10.0 |

|        |    |      |
|--------|----|------|
| 27     | 3  | 10.0 |
| 28     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 29     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 30     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 31     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 32     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 35     | 1  | 3.3  |
| 43     | 1  | 3.3  |
| Gender |    |      |
| Female | 25 | 83.3 |
| Male   | 5  | 16.7 |

*Note.* *f* = Frequency; % = Percentage.

The in-depth interviews prior to the training session provided key insights into understanding and extracting themes within the context of burnout within animal rescuers.

Participants described animal rescue work as emotionally burdensome and overwhelming due to repeated exposure to animal loss and suffering. As opposed to isolated incidents, distress and burnout was commonly experienced to be cumulative and increased in intensity over time, leading to emotional exhaustion, persistent grief, and psychological strain. Multiple participants also expressed the lack or absence of medical resources exacerbated the distress, and this would result in making difficult decisions regarding treatment priorities between the rescue cases. This theme overall highlights that the emotional toll the casework load takes on animal rescuers is not connected to isolated incidents but is a recurring feature of animal rescue work. The emotional toll of animal rescue work was further explored in terms of severity by the constant demands of rescue cases within minimal recovery time, and added financial strain. Participants reported feeling depleted and 'done with', whilst at the same time had to re-engage in new rescue cases. This pattern and repetitiveness contributed to burnout (emotional and physical), accompanied by fatigue, restricted emotional capacity, and feelings of being overwhelmed.

Another prominent theme emerged from the interviews which reflected the blurring of personal, emotional and physical boundaries from personal and professional lives of animal rescuers. Many participants reported difficulty in being able to separate their own identity from their roles as animal rescuers. Across both groups, participants described an increase in emotional distance from individuals that are not part of the animal rescue community.

They reported being faced with misunderstanding, criticism, stigma, and lack of empathy from society. This mostly resulted in isolation and social withdrawal, mistrust, and preference to either interact only with animal rescuers, or no one at all. Feelings of isolation were further strengthened by lack of validation and perceived hostility from the overall general community. Lastly, participants discussed feeling and experiencing lack of support from their environment as well as institutions. Many indicated that animal rescue work in Pakistan is not recognized as a formal structure, nor valuable by the wider community.

**Table 3**  
**Thematic Analysis of Pre-Intervention and Post Intervention interview Narratives of Burnout and Attitudes toward Dealing with Burnout in Animal Rescuers (N=30)**

| S. No. | JD-R Theory Variable  | Thematic Analysis derived from NVivo                        | Signs & Symptoms of Burnout Extracted from Pre-Intervention Interview Narratives   | Post-Intervention Attitude Change toward Dealing with Burnout Extracted from Post-Intervention Interview Narratives   |
|--------|---|---|--|---|
|        | <b>Job Demands - Emotional Demands</b><br>(Trauma exposure)             | Repeated Exposure to Animal Trauma                          | Frequent and regular crying spells after loss of rescued animals; intrusive memories; emotional breakdowns; panic-ridden thoughts; prolonged grief and guilt | Increased recognition that emotional distress is a normal response to trauma exposure; greater acceptance of emotional reactions and willingness to reflect on personal variables of distress thereby increasing mindfulness as evidenced by the above. |
|        | <b>Job Demands - Trauma Exposure / Compassion Stress</b>                | Witnessing Injury, Abuse and Death of Animals               | Emotional numbness after repeated deaths; sense of helplessness when rescues fail  | Improved awareness of compassion fatigue; developing reflective understanding that emotional detachment may function as a coping mechanism  |
|        | <b>Job Demands - Workload and Time Pressure</b>                         | Continuous Rescue Case Intake                               | Feeling unable to catch a break; immediate replacement of adopted animals with new rescue cases  | Greater acknowledgement of the need for pacing rescue work and recognizing limits in the number of animal rescues that can be managed   |
|        | <b>Job Demands - Resource Scarcity</b>                                  | Limited Medical Resources and Difficult Treatment Decisions | Stress encountered when prioritizing treatment among animals; moral distress related to insufficient resources   | Increased acceptance of systemic limitations; developing more balanced expectations regarding rescue outcomes   |
|        | <b>Job Demands - Financial Strain</b>                                   | Personal Financial Burden of Rescue Work                    | Sacrificing personal expenses for veterinary bills; inability to address personal medical needs  | Emerging recognition of the importance of balancing personal and rescue-related financial responsibilities  |
|        | <b>Insufficient Job Resources - Organizational Support</b>              | Lack of Institutional Support                               | Rescue work conducted independently; absence of funding or formal support structures   | Increased awareness of the importance of collaborative support networks and shared responsibility   |
|        | <b>Insufficient Job Resources - Social Support</b>                      | Social Misunderstanding and Stigma                          | Feeling criticized or misunderstood by society; perceived hostility; lack of empathy from others   | Slight shift toward seeking validation and emotional support within trusted communities   |
|        | <b>Insufficient Job Resources - Work-Life Boundaries</b>                | Blurred Personal and Professional Identity                  | Difficulty separating personal life from rescue work; overcrowded living environments with rescued animals   | Improved awareness of personal boundaries and the importance of maintaining separation between rescue work and personal life  |
|        | <b>Burnout Outcome - Emotional Exhaustion</b><br>(Maslach et al., 2001) | Chronic Emotional Depletion                                 | Feeling emotionally "done with"; persistent fatigue; restricted emotional capacity   | Increased acknowledgement of burnout symptoms and recognition of the need for emotional recovery  |
|        | <b>Burnout Outcome - Depersonalization</b>                              | Emotional Numbing and                                       | Withdrawal from non-rescuers; mistrust of society; preference to   | Greater openness to reflecting on emotional distancing and considering  |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>n / Psychological Withdrawal</b>                      | Social Withdrawal                              | interact only within rescue community  | reconnecting with broader support networks  |
| <b>Burnout Outcome - Reduced Personal Accomplishment</b> | Moral Distress Associated with Rescue Failures | Feelings of guilt when animals do not survive; self-blame for unsuccessful rescues | Shift toward reframing rescue work outcomes, recognizing effort and intent rather than only survival outcomes       |
| <b>Burnout Outcome - Lifestyle Disruption</b>            | Self-Neglect and Compromised Well-Being        | Sleep disturbances; neglect of personal health; delayed medical treatment          | Increased awareness of the importance of personal well-being and self-care alongside animal rescue responsibilities |

As per Table 3, the training sessions further reflected the prevalence of burnout processes in statements which focus mostly towards responsibility, and being unable to disengage from rescue work on a routine basis.

The individuals described feeling like they are constantly on their toes or 'on call', which deters them from focusing on their own routine and personal needs: "I feel like no matter what I do or how much I spend on these animals, my time and energy is never enough. I can barely focus on anything else". This is highly indicative of boundary erosion and casework overload. These accounts align with existing literature which emphasizes on how animal rescuers struggle greatly with work-life balance, which results in chronic fatigue (Paul et al., 2023).

Influence on burnout patterns can further be noted by an individual's occupational instability and overload faced within their caregiving role. This interpretation is fully congruent and explainable within Job Demands - Resources Model, where, when job demands remain high and resources are only partially improved, burnout reductions may occur but might not produce large between-group differences. In this context it may be noted that most rescuers are engaged in multiple roles outside of animal rescue, such as full-time or part-time students and / or employees. When compared to animal rescuers that work under organizational and institutional framework, volunteering rescuers are mostly exposed to unpredictable circumstances, responding to emergencies, and other strains and demands in addition to personal responsibilities.

Extending on demographic composition, when gendered differences are analyzed there is another key reflection noted where women in caregiving roles experience higher emotional responsibility and in turn receive lack of or reduced societal validation within the role (Fournier & Mustful, 2019). This may also be representative of how levels of burnout vary and can be reflected within the groups.

The training intervention here seems to have improved coping resources, leading to a reduction in burnout within the experimental group over time. However, because structural job demands remained high with ongoing rescues (trauma exposure, workload, financial strain), post intervention differences in burnout between groups were not significant while attitude shifts did occur including recognition of boundaries, awareness of burnout and reframing expectations.

## Conclusion

Hence the training aimed to identify these gaps and allow the rescuers to be able to confide within the safe space created for them during these sessions. Post-session feedback and reflections provided by the animal rescuers showed how brief and

structured activities catered towards their emotional wellbeing allowed them to 'feel somewhat lighthearted'. Most participants were able to further reflect on how rewarding working for these animals was which is why they are temporarily able to put aside their exhaustion and take their mind off burnout. The primary motivation pattern noticed across all participants could be analyzed by the repetitive statement that emerged, "If I won't do it who will?". Animal rescuers were content in handling the burden of case-related rescue work based on the satisfaction it brought to them after an animal recovered within their care. The emerging themes related to burnout combined with cognitive perspective, the experiences of the animal rescuers aligned closely with NATs which revolved around helplessness, guilt, and responsibility. Through the cognitive triad framework, animal rescuers were facilitated and guided to identify and challenge their thoughts and perceptions of perceived failure and likelihood to self-blame. Grounding strategies further supported emotional regulation to combat emotional overload, by restructuring their thought distortions to move from, "This is not enough" or "I could be doing more", towards "I am doing the best I can with the resources I have". Overall, the results suggested that burnout among the population of animal rescue work does not purely stem from workload but is sustained due to their perceptions and thought patterns. The results of the research indicate strong implications toward the provision of regular stress inoculation training interventions for all animal rescuers to effectively cater to their mental health and stress-burnout issues and motivate them toward psychological help seeking behavior while laying the foundation for attitude change.

### **Recommendations and Implications**

Further research may be carried out on the applicability of the stress inoculation process as described in the training intervention, to variables other than burnout. It may also be researched if the process as described here may also work for other population groups dealing with high levels of stress - burnout including but not limited to gravediggers, ambulance drivers, emergency room doctors etc.

With reference to the findings of the research, it is recommended that the mental health practitioners may facilitate the animal rescuer population who in turn would benefit from following and integrating stress-regulation techniques within their routine, which includes but is not limited to grounding, scheduled time for self to decompress, and being aware of their negative thought patterns. These individuals must also actively establish boundaries in order to combat feelings of guilt and overriding responsibilities which take away from being able to take care of themselves. Further, peer-support circles and community networks within Karachi can aid and facilitate the rescuers to be able to discuss difficulties within a safe space. The primary aim of these spaces must be to encourage and motivate one another rather than act as solely emotional venting circles, which may further increase stress.

Mental health professionals can create workshops on catering to stress and burnout more accessible for animal rescuers in terms of affordability and flexibility (online / in-person) which would motivate these rescuers to attend and help in further strengthening their coping skills for long-term positive impact and sustainability.

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