

Animal Depopulation Resiliency Check-in Tool Worksheet



This five-question resiliency check-in tool can be used by veterinarians and other animal-related professionals who are preparing for, participating in, and recovering from an animal depopulation event. This tool is designed to provide credible and attuned social support and self-assessment.

How to use the tool

Individually: This tool can be used individually by anyone who seeks to monitor his or her wellbeing throughout a depopulation experience. To do this, an individual can use this as a writing prompt tool to mitigate traumatic stress and promote post-traumatic growth.

Dyadically: This tool can be used as part of a dyadic “check-in friend” system that a professional sets up in preparation for a depopulation event. The “check-in friend” dyad would meet periodically, in person, by phone, or on a web meeting, and answer the questions together and share responses as a way

to establish credible socio-emotionally attuned support before, during, and after the depopulation event. The dyad can determine the frequency based on their own schedules and availability.

As a team: This tool can be used as a daily or weekly team check-in to establish and prioritize credible and socio-emotionally attuned support. Each member can be encouraged but not required to attend. If in attendance, each member can share or not share. Each person should be allotted about 7 minutes to share responses to the questions. It would be helpful to print out the tool and have copies on hand.

1. Please share if there is anything you cannot shake right now? What is it? What do you remember about it?
2. Can you think of what you have **DONE RIGHT** in that situation-even the smallest thing counts (or any recent situation if there was no response to Q1)?
3. Is there anything you wish you had done differently?
4. Is there anything you have learned or need to adjust for tomorrow or next time?
5. Is there anything you feel grateful for or made you laugh in this situation (or in your recent past)?

If someone is consistently unable to identify and connect with positive feelings at the end of the 5-step process, it would be appropriate to encourage them to seek specialized mental health support from a licensed professional. It is important to respect self-determination of the individual who may or may not choose to seek such specialized support. These types of specialized mental health support resources can be offered but not required. While the presence of positive feelings does not indicate the absence of psychological distress, the prolonged absence of positive feelings would be an appropriate indicator that additional support could be helpful.

All individuals who are participating in depopulation should be aware of the mental health resources that are available to them.

- Does your employer have behavioral health insurance benefits?
- Does your employer have an Employee Assistance Program?
- Free screening and referral resources available include:
 - ♦ screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools
 - ♦ suicidepreventionlifeline.org or call 988
 - ♦ samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline

Mental health care, including consulting with mental health care professionals, is a part of sound self-care during and after a depopulation event.

Citation: Elizabeth B. Strand, PhD, LCSW; Director, Veterinary Social Work, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Social Work; Tel: 865-755-9948; Email: estrand@utk.edu. In collaboration with the American Association of Swine Veterinarians. Development of this resource was funded by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service through the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program.

Please give us feedback on your experience using this Resiliency Check-in Tool by following the QR code:

