**Animal Programs Mental Health Understanding and Needs**

* **We deal with animal illness and death on a regular basis**
	+ Multifactorial
		- *Grief*
			* Primary grief – they are our family
			* Secondary grief – feeling the loss for our brethren on our own or other teams
			* Compound grief – loss can occur frequently & unexpectedly
				+ Multiple animals on one husbandry team
				+ All animals for veterinary team
		- *Guilt*
			* Our animals rely upon us for everything
			* Died under our care / in our hands /could we have done more, or less?
		- *Trauma*
			* Traumatic deaths
			* May be unable to prevent – e.g. animal introductions
			* Necropsy attendance – seeing beloved animals in a thousand pieces
		- *Anxiety*
			* “Today, tomorrow, and in the future, I have to be able to function safely and effectively in similar circumstances”
				+ Anesthesia
				+ Surgery
				+ Husbandry
			* Tomorrow will my animal be alive
				+ Disease outbreak, e.g. EMCV
				+ Individual disease, e.g. EEHV
		- *Having to relive experiences*
			* Working in the same areas where animal(s) lived and/or died
			* Guests / Volunteers ask what happened
			* Necropsy mementos
			* Debriefings
		- *Compassion fatigue, burnout*
* **Teams involved:**
	+ Animal Husbandry – animal keepers/aquarists (care takers), managers
	+ Animal Health - veterinarians, veterinary technicians (nurses), keepers, managers
	+ Behavioral Husbandry/Science
	+ Guest animal experience – interpretive guides
	+ Animal Nutrition, Water Sciences, Dive Team, Conservation
	+ Senior Leaders
* **Support needed:**
	+ A well thought out strategy with input from our team and mental health professionals
	+ Peer support – folks who understand our business, our emotions, our mental well-being
	+ Mental health first aiders (Mental Health Advocates) – trained members of our teams who understand our business
	+ Mental health professionals who understand our business
	+ Education on brain health, resilience, stress, and anxiety