Fostering Rescued Dogs: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Foster Care Providers

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Animals in the care of shelters and rescues frequently have health and behavioral challenges that must be addressed before they can be adopted. Volunteer foster providers perform an important service by bringing vulnerable animals into their homes to address their needs therefore making them better prepared for successful adoption. Despite their critical role in animal rescue, the experiences of volunteer foster providers have not been examined systematically. Given the difficulty recruiting and retaining these volunteers and the potential for them to experience negative outcomes such as compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress caused by performing care work with rescued animals, such research is necessary. Current and former foster providers ($N = 85$) completed an online survey of their perceptions of the positives and negatives of the experience and measures of psychological outcomes of care work. The findings show that fostering rescued dogs comes with a mix of positive and negative experiences. Further, the findings suggest the importance for rescues of being aware of the risk factors associated with compassion fatigue and protective factors predicting compassion satisfaction.

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Millions of dogs, cats, and other animals come into animal shelters in the United States annually. According to Shelter Animals Count (www.shelteranimalscount.org) which collects data from shelters and rescues across the country each year, in 2018, 2873 organizations reported taking in over 3 million cats and dogs (2019). Of those taken into care in 2018, over 2 million dogs and cats were reported to have been adopted, returned to owners, or transferred to other organizations (Shelter Animals Count, 2019). Unfortunately, roughly half a million animals experienced other outcomes including euthanasia while in care (Shelter Animals Count, 2019).

Shelters and other animal welfare organizations utilize foster volunteers to address the stress and overcrowding often present in their facilities (Pets for Patriots, 2012). Organizations present a compelling rationale for fostering including saving dogs' lives and giving dogs a second chance to thrive (Maddie's Fund, 2000; Best Friends Animal Society, n. d.). In addition, the rationale includes benefits to foster providers including enjoyment, personal growth, and companionship with people and animals (Maddie's Fund, 2000; Hamilton, 2018). Foster care providers perform a critical service in the animal rescue world by bringing vulnerable animals into their homes to assess and address their needs and make them better prepared for successful adoption. Foster care providers assess animals in a home environment and provide potential adopters with better information about the behavior and needs of animals they are interested in adopting. People who provide foster care for dogs address issues such as house training, basic obedience training, leash walking, and socialization with other animals all of which make animals more adoptable and their adoptions more likely to be successful. I can speak to the role of foster caretaker from personal experience because I have been a foster for a Labrador Retriever rescue in Northeast Ohio for approximately three years. This project was in part motivated by my desire to explore the experiences of people like me who do this work every day.

As I have seen in my own work with rescued dogs, many of the animals arriving at shelters and rescues have health, socialization, and behavioral challenges that must be addressed before they can be adopted (Seattle Animal Shelter, 2008). In some cases, the challenges faced by animals are minor but in others they are not. In both cases, shelters may call upon volunteers who can serve as foster care providers to bridge the gap between intake and adoption for animals in need. In some cases, foster providers are called upon to work with animals that have been abused, neglected, and otherwise traumatized. Many of these animals would be unadoptable without the time and attention given to them by foster care providers (Seattle Animal Shelter, 2008).

Despite their critical role in animal rescue, the experiences, positive and negative, of foster care providers and other animal rescue volunteers have not been examined systematically. The results of a study sponsored by Maddie's Fund (2018) provide insight into reasons why people who have fostered stop doing so. In this study, people reported that the needs of their own pets, the adoption of too many pets, and personal issues (crowded schedules, life changes, and living situations) were the most common reasons cited (Maddie's Fund, 2018). Doing further research on the experiences of foster caregivers is critical for three primary reasons. First, recruiting and retaining foster care providers for shelter and rescue animals is reportedly difficult (Edge Research, 2017). The need for foster care providers in animal rescue typically far outpaces the number of available volunteers. Investigating the experiences of current and former foster care providers may provide information which could enable organizations to recruit, train, and retain volunteers more successfully. Second, while caring for and working with rescued, displaced, and abandoned animals can be very rewarding, doing so has the potential to expose volunteers to physical and psychological stressors which may lead to negative outcomes such as compassion fatigue, burnout,

and secondary traumatic stress. Figley and Roop (2006) describe the work of people in animal welfare aptly:

> Caring for animals is more than a job. For most people who work in the animal-protection field, it's a calling, and along with the rewards come great emotional hardships. Whether you work at a shelter, a sanctuary, or a veterinary clinic, or in one of the thousands of animal-protection groups in America, every day brings a mix of hope and despair. Even on the best of days, there are disappointments and painful moral choices and there is always more work to do. (p. ix)

Similarly, Bradshaw et al. (2012) describe care work with rescued animals deeply rewarding but also relentlessly challenging.

Third, the health and wellbeing of rescued animals is impacted by the health and wellbeing of those humans who care for them (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Bradshaw et al. (2012) argue that meeting the needs of rescued animals is dependent on the skills and capacities of people providing care. Essentially, when those caring for animals are compromised in terms of their emotional and physical wellbeing, meeting the needs of animals is itself compromised (Bradshaw, et al., 2012).

Research on the emotional impact of care work has typically involved individuals caring for other humans. Substantial research has documented compassion fatigue in people in various professions that involve exposure to trauma (Hannah & Woolgar, 2018). Baird and Kracen (2006) synthesized research on predictors of vicarious traumatization and secondary traumatic stress in those working in mental health and the foster care system. They reported that there the evidence that secondary traumatic stress is most strongly associated with the amount of exposure to traumatic material and having a personal trauma history.

Research on the experiences specifically of people providing foster care for children has been done although less often than in other populations of caregivers. Hannah and Woolgar (2018) investigated the experiences of foster parents in the United Kingdom and found levels of compassion fatigue similar to levels in other forms of care work. They also reported that compassion fatigue predicted intent to stop providing foster care. Given the difficulty of recruiting and retaining foster parents, Hannah and Woolgar (2018) argue that compassion fatigue is one of many factors that need to be addressed.

While variables such as compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress have been studied in other domains where people perform care work (e.g., among medical professionals, first responders, and social workers), they have not been as well studied in people caring for animals (Hanrahan et al., 2018). A small amount of research has examined these issues in veterinary professionals (mainly veterinarians and veterinary technicians) calling attention to their being at risk for secondary traumatic stress, burnout, moral stress, and suicidality but much more remains to be done (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Hanrahan et al., 2018; American Psychological Association, 2019; Goldberg, 2019). Bradshaw et al. (2012) list many stressors associated with animal care including exposure to bad outcomes, moral stress related to euthanasia, the fact of being unable to help all that need it, and the limitations of working with a population (animals) that is largely without legal protections. They further note that animal care professionals are often deeply committed to the work and attached to those in their care. Sometimes, this comes at the expense of their own physical, emotional, and even economic wellbeing. In a more recent study, Hill et al. (2020) examined the experience of compassion fatigue in veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and animal control officers. They reported that levels of compassion fatigue in the form of burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and perceived stress were

high (Hill et al., 2020). They also found that compassion fatigue increased with performing euthanasia and exposure to neglect and cruelty cases.

At present, no empirical research has been published which involved exploring the social and psychological impacts of the care work provided by people volunteering to foster rescued animals. In this research, I investigated the experiences of current and former foster care providers who volunteer with dog rescue organizations to answer the following qualitative questions:

1) What motivated them to become foster care providers for dogs?
2) What do they see as the most rewarding aspects of fostering dogs?
3) What do they see as the most challenging aspects of fostering dogs?
4) Why do they stop fostering?

In addition, I explored the following quantitative questions:

1) How are outcome variables compassion satisfaction, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and eudemonic wellbeing predicted by functions performed by volunteering?
2) How do current and former foster providers differ on both the outcome and predictor variables?

Given the exploratory nature of the study, I did not have an a priori set of hypotheses. However, I did have expectations based on my own experiences fostering dogs and those of other people fostering in my organization. I employed Grounded Theory Method to analyze the qualitative data.

Method

Participants

This research was reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee which is part of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Mount Union. The research was conducted in full accordance with the policies of that committee including recruiting, informed consent, and debriefing. Participants were recruited by posting a link to the survey on social media sites related to animal welfare and rescue. Participants were also be recruited by directly contacting shelters and rescue organizations and asking them to share the link to the study to their volunteers. Finally, participants were recruited through the Human-Animal Interaction Section (Section 13), Division 17 of the American Psychological Association and the Companion Animal Psychology Facebook page. Informed consent and debriefing were conducted online. Participants were directed to contact me if they had questions or concerns. The research plan included providing information related to mental health resources and suicide prevention to participants if contacted. I was not contacted by any of the participants.

Ninety-two individuals began the survey but seven did not go beyond the consent form to finish responding leaving 85 participants. Of the participants, 57 reported that they were currently fostering (62%) while 24 indicated that they were former foster caregivers (26.1%). Two participants reported that they had never fostered, and one indicated that they had fostered previously but did not have a foster in their care currently. Most participants were female ($n = 81$, 88%) and white ($n = 81$, 88%). One participant reported being Hispanic or Latino/Latina, one reported being Asian or Asian American, and one reported being mixed. The bulk of the participants were between 25 and 64 years of age (91% of participants) with the most common age group being between 45 and 54 ($n = 31$, 33.7%). Two participants were between 18 and 24, 14 were between 35 and 44, 16 were between 55 and 64, and 5 were 65 and over. Sixty-one (66.3%) participants reported being employed and working full-time. Of the remaining participants, 7 (7.6%) were employed part-time, 8 (8.7%) were not employed and not looking for work, 8 (8.7%) were retired, and 1 (1.1%) reported being disabled and unable to work. Fifty-three (57.6%) participants reported serving in capacities in addition to fostering in their organizations while 32

did not (34.8%). Most of the participants reported volunteering with a non-profit rescue that is not breed-specific ($n = 50$, 54.3%). Twenty-four participants (26.1%) were volunteers with breed-specific organizations. The remaining participants volunteered with city or county pounds ($n = 2$, 2.2%), a Humane Society or ASPCA shelter ($n = 4$, 4.3%), or a breed and non-breed non-profit ($n = 2$, 2.2%). One participant indicated volunteering with multiple types of organizations while two indicated that they did not volunteer with any of the indicated organizations.

Participants were asked if they served in other capacities in rescue organizations in addition to fostering. The majority of those who responded to the question did serve in other capacities ($n = 53$, 57.6%) while 32 (34.8%) reported that they only fostered. Other roles included providing supplies ($n = 1$, .9%), caring for dogs after intake ($n = 8$, 7.2%), adoption events ($n = 11$, 9.9%), public relations ($n = 6$, 5.4%), fundraising ($n = 8$, 7.2%), screening adopters and/or fosters ($n = 18$, 16.2%), networking with shelters ($n = 4$, 3.6%), administrative work ($n = 5$, 4.5%), leadership and coordination ($n = 13$, 11.7%), specialized roles ($n = 3$, 2.7%), dog evaluation/assessment ($n = 4$, 3.6%), and transporting dogs ($n = 22$, 19.8%).

When asked how long they had been or were involved in fostering, 48 (52.2%) indicated 0 to 5 years, 21 (22.8%) chose 6 to 10 years, and 16 (17.4%) reported fostering for more than 10 years. The responses to the question concerning how many total dogs the participants had fostered were difficult to interpret. The number of dogs reported ranged from 0 to 900 ($M = 55.14$, $SD = 123.126$). It is unclear whether some participants who reported fostering very large numbers of dogs were referring to personally doing so in their homes or if they were reporting the number of dogs fostered by an organization in which they were leaders or coordinators. In retrospect, the question should have been worded differently to ensure that respondents answered the question only in terms of the number of dogs personally fostered in their own homes.

Design

The design of this exploratory study was descriptive and correlational. The Grounded Theory Method (GMT) was employed to conduct thematic content analysis of open-ended responses. As described by Bryant (2017), GMT is an inductive approach to research with qualitative data. In general, the process involves systematically grounding the data through the identification of thematic categories which arise from the words of participants.

Materials

The survey was constructed and delivered through SurveyMonkey. The following demographic information was collected: age, race/ethnicity, sex, and employment status. The purpose of collecting demographic information was only to describe the sample rather than to make between groups comparisons. Participants were asked to indicate if they were current foster providers or former foster providers. They were asked to indicate if they serve in other capacities with animal rescue organizations and to identify what type of organization they work with (e.g., publicly funded shelter, non-profit rescue, breed rescue, etc.). They were also asked how long they had been fostering dogs and how many total dogs they had fostered.

The survey included the following open-ended questions: Why did you become involved in fostering dogs? What are the most positive or rewarding aspects of your fostering experience? What are the negatives or most challenging aspects of your fostering experience? If you no longer foster dogs, why did you stop? Thematic coding schemes (see Appendix) were generated by the author and an undergraduate research assistant who, independently, read all the participants' responses to the open-ended questions. While reading, we noted each novel theme we encountered while reading on notecards. After doing so, we met to review and reduce the number of categories and discuss examples of thoughts belonging to each category. The next step was for us to

independently code the responses given by five participants after which we met to discuss discrepancies in the application of the coding schemes. This was followed by each of us coding all the participants' responses. When we had both completed coding, I evaluated the hit rate (agreement between the two coders) after the first pass. We met a final time to discuss and resolve discrepancies prior to calculating the frequency of thoughts in each category. The initial hit rate for the first question assessing why participants chose to foster was only 76%. After discussion, we found that we were interpreting thoughts referring specifically to helping dogs differently. We were essentially placing these thoughts in two different categories. After discussion, we resolved the problem by refining both categories. With the second open-ended question (positives of fostering), the initial hit rate was 84%. As with the previous question, the sources of the discrepancies were discussed and resolved. For the question concerning the negatives of fostering, the initial hit rate was 89%. Finally, for the question concerning why people stopped fostering, the initial hit rate was 97%. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved.

Compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress were assessed using the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) (Stamm, 1995). Permission for use of the scale was granted through The Center for Victims of Torture (www.ProQOL.org). This scale is made up of 30 items responded to on a 5-point scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The scale generates separate scores for compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. Each subscale contains 10 items. Five items were reverse-scored before total subscale scores were calculated. High subscale scores indicate greater experience of the quality being measured. The only modification to the scale was in the instructions which were modified to refer specifically to fostering dogs. For each subscale, the highest possible score is 50 and the lowest 10.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998) was used to assess perceptions of the functions performed by volunteering in the participants' lives. The scale is made up of 30 items rated on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (not at all important/accurate) to 7 (extremely important/accurate). The scale generates scores on 6 5-item subscales (protective, values, career, social, understanding, and enhancement). Total subscale scores were calculated with high scores indicating greater importance in each domain. For each subscale, the highest possible score is 35 and the lowest 5.

Wellbeing was assessed using the Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB) (Waterman et al., 2010). Questions on this 21-item measure are responded to on a 5-point scale from 0 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Seven items were reverse-scored before calculating a total scale score. Higher scores reflect greater Eudaimonic well-being. The highest possible score is 105 and the lowest 21.

Self-care habits were assessed using a modified version of the Self-Care Assessment for Psychologists (SCAP) (Dorociak et al., 2017). The instructions and the items were modified to refer specifically to work and habits while fostering dogs. The scale includes 21 items divided into 5 subscales. The items are rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (almost always). The subscales are in the areas of professional support (5 items), professional development (5 items), life balance (4 items), cognitive strategies (4 items), and daily balance (3 items). For the professional support and professional development subscales, the highest possible score is 35 and the lowest 5. For the life balance and cognitive strategies subscales, the highest possible score is 28 and the lowest 4. For the daily balance subscale, the highest possible score is 21 and the lowest 3. Total subscale scores were calculated with higher scores indicating greater frequency of the experience indicated in the item.

Other materials included informed consent and debriefing forms which were delivered online.

Procedure

Participants followed the link to the survey in SurveyMonkey where they first saw the Informed Consent form. They then completed the demographic items followed by the questionnaires measuring the variables. They then saw the debriefing statement. Participation was expected to take no more than 40 minutes.

Results

Why Did You Become Involved in Fostering Dogs?

The results of the content analysis for the question concerning why respondents became involved in fostering dogs are presented in Table 1. Participants gave a wide range of reasons for choosing to foster dogs suggesting many routes to involvement. The most common theme represented in participants' responses concerned helping dogs and saving dogs' lives. These thoughts made up approximately 19% of expressions made by respondents. Examples of thoughts from this category include:

I was appalled by the number of dogs killed by shelters. Participant 7

Because in some situations it is the only way to save a dog from euthanasia…. Participant 16

When I became aware of the overpopulation problem and euthanasia rate … Participant 64

I am passionate about helping dogs that have been failed by humans. Participant 82

I wanted to help animals. Participant 83

Thoughts related to saving or helping dogs were followed in frequency by statements indicating love or passion for dogs. These thoughts made up approximately 16% of expressions.

We have dogs we love dogs … Participant 20

I have always loved dogs … I don't ever see myself not fostering! Participant 54

I've always loved dogs… Participant 72

References to providing specific benefits to dogs and contributing to the greater good were equally frequent at about 11% of expressions. Examples of thoughts referring to providing benefits to dogs included:

Helping them to move on from past experiences and on to a new family! Participant 11

… provide an opportunity to give a loving home. Participant 15

The dogs get to land in a safe space in a home environment, socialize with other dogs, get more exercise and training, and I believe that their eventual placements are more successful due to the rescue knowing more information about the dog before going into an adoption. Participant 34

… wanted to help transition dogs in need of a permanent home. Participant 76

Examples of thoughts indicating a desire to contribute to the greater good included:

After Trump was elected, I felt so much despair about the state of the world. I realized that fostering a dog would be my one small way of shining some light in the darkness. Participant 12

We also wanted to give back so looked for fostering opportunities. Participant 31

I felt I had to do my part to help. Participant 64
... this was my way of giving back ... Participant 72

The next most common type of thought at approximately 9% of statements involved seeing that there was a need. Sometimes these expressions involved indicating that participants were responding to becoming aware of an organization's need for fosters. For example:

Rescue made a general public request for fosters. Participant 2
Because there was a need. Participant 13
I had adopted through the organization and was looking to adopt again when they asked me to foster a dog in need. Participant 30
... got associated with several rescue groups through Facebook. Over time I learned how I could help. Participant 70

About 5% of expressions made be the respondents indicated either that they could not or did not want to adopt a dog. For example:

My first dog died & I wasn't ready to have "my own" dog but I still wanted a dog around. Participant 32
Because my husband will let me foster but not keep. Participant 55
... I wanted temporary canine companionship. Participant 58

As indicated in Table 1, the remaining categories comprised 4% or less of thoughts expressed in respondents' answers.

What Are the Most Positive or Rewarding Aspects of Your Fostering Experience?
The content analysis results for the question concerning the positive and rewarding aspects of fostering are presented in Table 2. Combined, four types of thoughts made up nearly 90% of expressions made by respondents to this question. References to seeing fostered dogs adopted into a good home or with a loving family were the most common thoughts (35%). For example:

Finding a good home where both dog and owner are happy. Participant 8
Keeping in touch with all of their new families. Participant 19
Seeing a worthy dog get a great home. Participant 26
Having a dog find the perfect home. Participant 53

The second most common type of thought involved expressions about seeing dogs flourish, recover, grow, and/or thrive (33%).

The most rewarding is watching the fearful animals learn to trust again. Participant 6
Seeing sacred or anxious dogs flourish after extensive positive reinforcement training, watching them thrive in their adoptive homes, and knowing I am giving them a chance they might not otherwise have had. Participant 21
Sure it's tough sometimes, but watching a once scared shell of a dog, completely blossom, is the most amazing thing to witness. Participant 54
Seeing a scared or confused dog relax, trust me and be a "normal" dog. Participant 83

Approximately 14% of thoughts involved references to making a difference in a dog's life. This category includes thoughts that circle back to the reasons given by many participants in their

responses to the previous question. These thoughts involved saving dogs' lives, giving dogs a chance, and helping abused/neglected dogs.

Knowing I made a difference in one dog's life. Participant 7

Helping dogs who might not otherwise make it out of the shelter alive without a foster. Participant 41

Getting to help a dog that would've been put down if we hadn't helped. Participant 68

Helping keep dogs out of shelters and preventing unnecessary euthanasia. Participant 86

References to getting to meet and help new dogs comprised approximately 7% of participants' thoughts. Many of these thoughts indicated an emphasis on experiences specifically with new dogs as rewarding.

Meeting and learning each new dog's personality. Participant 7

I enjoy meeting and getting to know the dogs … Participant 13

Learn a lot about dog behavior & training with each new foster. Participant 32

Table 1
Content Analysis Results: Why Did You Become Involved in Fostering Dogs?

Thematic Coding Category	Frequency	Percent
Saving dogs' lives/Helping dogs/animals (e.g., euthanasia concern, concern for animal welfare, concern about bad shelter outcomes, help specific breed)	17	18.48%
Love dogs/animals (e.g., enjoyment, love, passionate)	15	16.30%
Benefits to dogs (e.g., chance at good home/new life/better life, chance to be successful, help fearful dogs, help dogs failed by people, change/correct behavior)	10	10.87%
Greater good (e.g., want to give back, want to do my part, want to make a difference, I care, community benefit)	10	10.87%
Saw there was a need (e.g., was asked to foster, rescue called for fosters, learned how I could help)	8	8.70%
Cannot/don't want to adopt (e.g., Can't adopt, temporary companionship, not ready to adopt, no long-term commitment, rescue covers expenses)	5	5.43%
Recruited by others (e.g., spouse involved, family member involved, got progressively more involved, started with other animals moved to dogs)	4	4.35%
Hospice/medical (e.g., hospice foster, medical foster, end of life care)	4	4.35%
Wanted to try it out (e.g., always wanted to, wanted to find a pet, way to expose kids to dogs)	4	4.35%
Have time/skills/resources (e.g., kids now at college, am a vet tech)	4	4.35%
Makes feel better (e.g., feel better, feeds the soul; get cuddles/love)	3	3.26%
Own dog (e.g., good at helping other dogs; have good pet, good for own dog, exercise for own dog)	3	3.26%
COVID (e.g., home more with COVID, work at home because of COVID, COVID makes it possible)	3	3.26%
Response to abuse/maltreatment (abuse, neglect, mistreatment by breeders, hoarding)	2	2.17%

Table 2

Content Analysis Results: What Are the Most Positive or Rewarding Aspects of Your Fostering Experience?

Thematic Coding Category	Frequency	Percent
Good home/family (e.g., seeing dog in good/better home, updates from adopters, seeing families happy with dogs, help families, keep in touch with families)	31	35.23%
Seeing dogs flourish/recover/grow/thrive (e.g., seeing dogs happy, see dog come out of shell, see damaged dog heal, see dogs have new experiences, seeing change in dogs, healing sick dogs, giving good end of life care)	29	32.95%
Made a difference (e.g., saved dog's life, gave dog a chance, helped abused/neglected dogs, helped raise dog, contributed to worthy cause, end of life care)	12	13.64%
Meeting/helping new dogs (e.g., learning new dogs' personalities, getting to know dogs, building relationships with new/different dogs, getting to love on dogs, getting to enjoy dogs)	6	6.82%
Love/appreciation from dog (e.g., love/appreciation from dog, unconditional love from dog)	4	4.55%
Relationships with people in the rescue (e.g., making friends, rescue as family/community, wonderful people)	3	3.41%
Gain training/teaching skills (e.g., learn about training, learn about dog behavior)	1	1.14%
Foster failing as positive (e.g., usually end up keeping them)	1	1.14%
Helping others see value of breed/rescued dog	1	1.14%

What Are the Negatives or Most Challenging Aspects of Your Fostering Experience?

Participants provided a wide variety of negatives to the fostering experience. The most common were thoughts related to struggling with addressing foster dog behaviors that make working with dogs difficult or affect adoptability (17% of expressions).

> *Learning that you won't mesh with or even like your foster dog sometimes.* Participant 26
> *Sometimes the dogs are destructive or have behavioral issues. The majority are untrained.* Participant 34
> *Fixing bad behaviors.* Participant 53
> *Working with shy/fearful dogs.* Participant 82

Approximately 14% of respondents' expressions referred to the difficulty of seeing dogs in pain, struggling, or suffering.

> *Seeing dogs come from such terrible previous situations, watching them struggle with fears and lack of care.* Participant 11
> *Anger and sadness over sick abused dogs.* Participant 33
> *The sadness they experience, confusion, anxiety and fear.* Participant 51
> *Seeing firsthand how completely awful too many humans are to innocent animals.* Participant 61

Many participants described the difficulty of letting go and becoming too attached to their foster dogs (13% of expressions).

Not becoming attached to the dogs … Participant 15

And sometimes it's very hard to let them go. Participant 34

Having to say goodbye. Participant 43

I cry like a baby every time they go to a permanent home. And I wonder if they are okay and happy. Participant 55

Approximately 10% of expressions concerned coping with dogs' health and medical problems as well as advanced age.

Hw [heartworm] positive dogs. Participant 3

The only negatives for me would the fleas, ticks, and illnesses that the dogs can come in with. Participant 54

Preventable illness, like parvo, killing puppies needlessly. Participant 61

My very first foster experience was a litter of puppies who ended up with distemper and over the course of a month every single one died. Participant 70

References to the disruption to home and routine caused by foster dogs made up roughly 9% of expressions.

Getting them used to our dog and the rules of the house. Participant 8

The most negative part about fostering dogs is the disruption to my home and my own dogs. Participant 13

It will sometimes limit my availability to be gone for longer periods of time depending on the neediness of my foster at the time. Participant 45

Not being able to be away from home for long. Participant 79

The pain of failing to save the lives of or rehabilitate dogs made up about 7% of respondents' expressions.

We've had to have 2 dogs pts [put to sleep], one because of old age/sickness and one because of behavioral issues. That's really hard even though it's the right choice. Participant 31

When a dog can't be helped or saved. Participant 40

It's not always easy. Some dogs are not redeemable. Some dogs are too far gone or even if they are redeemable, it takes a lot of time and patience to get them to a good place. It's not always sunshine and roses. Participant 72

Difficulties with their own dog(s) were mentioned in 7% of respondents' expressions.

Foster not being compatible with my dogs. I have a male collie who is not receptive to male fosters. Participant 9

Inter-dog issues between our resident dogs and foster dogs (dog fights/aggression). Participant 30

It's scary introducing a new dog into an established household with other pets. Participant 34

As indicated in Table 3, the remaining categories represented 4% or less of expressions.

Table 3
Content Analysis Results: What Are the Negatives or Most Challenging Aspects of Your Fostering Experience?

Thematic Coding Category	Frequency	Percent
Struggling with dog behaviors (e.g., learning differences in needs, working on bad habits, untrained dogs, destructive behaviors, fearful/anxious behaviors, combative/aggressive dogs, high maintenance fosters, don't like the foster dog, foster dog doesn't mesh with you)	16	16.49%
Seeing dogs in pain/suffering (e.g., abuse/neglect/illness/injury; Seeing their sadness/fear/confusion, bad physical/mental conditions, puppy mill dogs, seeing how people treat animals, people who lie about dogs they surrender)	14	14.43%
Letting go (e.g., saying goodbye, getting attached, crying when they go, worrying about them, grieving)	13	13.40%
Health/medical problems (e.g., heartworm, fleas/ticks, preventable illnesses, underweight/malnutrition, hospice dogs/senior dogs)	10	10.31%
Disruption to home/routine (e.g., trouble adjusting to our rules, damage to house/possessions, time, money, limits ability to leave home)	9	9.28%
Failing to save dogs (e.g., having to euthanize, having to put dogs to sleep (PTS), some dogs that can't be saved, when dogs die in your care, explaining that dog can't be saved)	7	7.22%
Problems with own dog(s) (e.g., foster not good with our dog(s), problems with our dog(s), disruption for our dogs)	7	7.22%
Problems with organization (e.g., lack of information, drama with organization, not getting help from organization, disorganized organization, lack of training, wasn't told truth)	4	4.12%
Problems getting foster adopted (e.g., waiting for foster to be adopted, potential adopters/adopters returning dogs, failing to find right home)	4	4.12%
House training (e.g., potty training, poop, cleaning up after puppies)	4	4.12%
No negatives	4	4.12%
Foster failing	3	3.09%
Problems/disagreements with potential adopters	1	1.03%
Saying no (e.g., when don't have room, when have to say no)	1	1.03%

If You No Longer Foster Dogs, Why Did You Stop?

Despite the wording of the question, the most common thought participants gave in response to the question concerning no longer fostering was that they were still doing so or that the question was not applicable (52% of expressions). Statements concerning no longer having room for additional dogs made up roughly 14% of expressions. Examples of these thoughts include:

We adopted a dog we fostered and did not have room for another in our home. Participant 2

We've fostered and failed (adopted). We currently don't have room to foster as we have 6 dogs. Participant 15

Currently have 4 failed foster dogs in a community with a 3 dog maximum ... Participant 65

Because we "foster failed" and ended up adopting one of our fosters. We have 3 dogs (2 over 100lbs) so it is crowded. Participant 86

Approximately 11% of expressions cited problems with participants' own dogs or other pets as the reason for no longer fostering. For example:

Now have 2 dogs (both former fosters) who are not okay with other dogs. Participant 22

... our pack has a lot of opinions about other dogs. Our cat has no claws so we have to be careful about his safety. Participant 34

... some of the dogs we have don't deal well with new dogs. Participant 65

About 8% of thoughts referred to the participants' living situation having changed or otherwise being incompatible with fostering. For example:

My living situation has changed so I no longer have the room to foster. Participant 6

I live in an apartment so it's hard to have a dog with separation issues, which is what I went through with my former foster. Don't feel like I can risk it again. Participant 12

I only foster during the summer because I go to school and live in an apartment that doesn't allow dogs during the rest of the year. Participant 45

Some participants indicated that they plan to foster again at some point (approximately 8% of expressions).

When the day comes that we lose one of our dogs, we'll consider fostering again. Participant 15

We have a dog aggressive female. However, she's 15 so we hope to foster again after she passes. Participant 26

My dog needed surgery, twice, with a long recovery. I'll be back at it once she's healed. Participant 61

I am taking a break to work on my own dogs' behaviors. Participant 69

Table 4
Content Analysis Results: If You No Longer Foster Dogs, Why Did You Stop?

Thematic Coding Category	Frequency	Percent
Still fostering (e.g., not applicable, still foster, limiting type of fostering)	34	52%
No longer have room (e.g., foster failed and don't have room, adopted another dog and don't have room, too many dogs already)	9	13.80%
Problems with own dogs/pets (e.g., own dogs have issues, concerns with other pets, have dog-aggressive dog, dogs became intolerant of other dogs)	7	10.80%
Living situation changed (e.g., new baby, had to move, now live in apartment, apartment doesn't allow pets, community has dog limit, homeless)	5	7.69%
Will foster again (e.g., foster again when current dog passes, plan to foster in future, need to take a break)	5	7.69%
Decided would rather adopt	1	1.54%
Didn't like the people in the organization	1	1.54%
Family/health issues (e.g., my health status, family member health)	1	1.54%
Destruction of home (e.g., dogs destroyed my house)	1	1.54%
Changed species (e.g., switched to kittens)	1	1.54%

Quantitative Variables

Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for the full sample for the quantitative variables in the study. Unfortunately, of the 85 participants, an average of only 63 completed the quantitative scales. This represents approximately 74% of the initial sample. On the Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL), average compassion satisfaction scores tended to be high while scores for burnout and post-traumatic secondary stress were typically low. Responses to the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) revealed fairly high average scores for the value expressive and self-understanding functions of volunteering. Protective, social, and enhancement mean scores were moderate. The mean for seeing volunteering as a means of career development was low. While the mean for responses to the Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-Being (QEWB) was moderate, the reliability level of the scale was unacceptably low limiting the ability to interpret the results. As a result, hypothesis testing with this variable was not pursued. Responses to the modified version of the Self-Care Assessment for Psychologists (SCAP) revealed moderately high means for self-care through professional support, professional development, life balance, and cognitive strategies while the mean for daily balance was moderate.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for the Quantitative Variables

Measure	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Cronbach alpha
PROQOL Compassion Satisfaction	61	33.00	50.00	45.00	4.14	.83
PROQOL Burnout	60	11.00	34.00	19.28	5.09	.77
PROQOL Secondary Traumatic Stress	62	12.00	33.00	19.76	4.86	.73
VFI Protective	63	6.00	35.00	18.06	7.31	.80
VFI Values	62	19.00	35.00	29.95	3.78	.61
VFI Career	63	5.00	35.00	11.67	8.83	.92
VFI Social	62	5.00	33.00	18.52	7.16	.87
VFI Understanding	62	5.00	35.00	25.90	6.47	.82
VFI Enhancement	63	5.00	35.00	22.19	6.82	.84
QEWB Eudaimonic Wellbeing	63	41.00	78.00	62.30	9.06	.55
SCAP Self-Care Professional Support	62	15.00	30.00	25.36	3.66	.64
SCAP Self-Care Professional Development	62	14.00	30.00	24.00	4.42	.79
SCAP Self-Care Life Balance	62	12.00	24.00	20.08	3.32	.67
SCAP Self-Care Cognitive Strategies	62	12.00	24.00	19.92	3.20	.64
SCAP Self-Care Daily Balance	63	4.00	18.00	12.49	4.02	.74

Note: Of the 85 participants, an average of 63 completed the quantitative scales. This represents approximately 74% of the sample.

Correlations

The correlations among scores on the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) subscales are presented in Table 6. There was a large, significant, negative correlation between compassion satisfaction and burnout and a large, significant, positive correlation between burnout and secondary traumatic stress. None of the correlations between ProQOL subscale scores and QEWB scores were significant.

Correlations between the subscales from the ProQOL (compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress) and subscales from the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) and the modified Self-Care Assessment (SCAP) are presented in Table 7. Compassion satisfaction was predicted by three domains from the VFI (protective, understanding, and enhancement). In all three cases, the correlation was small and positive. Compassion satisfaction was also predicted by three domains from the SCAP (professional development, life balance, and cognitive strategies). In the case of self-care through professional development and through maintaining life balance, the correlations were large and positive while that for self-care using cognitive strategies was medium and positive. There were significant negative correlations between four of the self-care subscales

(professional development, life balance, cognitive strategies, and daily balance) and burnout. These correlations were all medium in size. Finally, there were three significant negative correlations between secondary traumatic stress and forms of self-care (professional development, life balance, and daily balance). The correlation with professional development was small, while those with life balance and daily balance were medium.

Table 6
Correlations among the PROQOL Subscales and Eudaimonic Wellbeing

PROQOL Subscale		1	2	3
1 Compassion Satisfaction	r	1		
	N	61		
2 Burnout	r	-.600**	2	
	N	58	60	
3 Secondary Traumatic Stress	r	-0.238	.608**	3
	N	60	60	62

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Comparisons Based on Foster Status
Tables 8, 9, and 10 contain the means and standard deviations for the ProQOL, VFI, and SCAP respectively. While the goal was to compare individuals who were currently fostering dogs with those who had stopped fostering either permanently or temporarily, the majority of participants reported currently fostering and only one person was temporarily not fostering. As a result, between groups comparisons are difficult to interpret. The results of ANOVA tests revealed non-significant differences between groups in all cases.

Discussion
This project was born out of a combination of both professional and personal interests. As researcher, I have a general interest in human-animal interactions. As a social psychologist I have a particular interest in how people describe their experiences, beliefs, and values. I also foster dogs for a Labrador Retriever rescue in Northeast Ohio. While the study launched in late 2019 prior to the onset of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection continued through spring semester of 2020 as lockdowns quickly went into place. While it was not typically referred to as a reason for becoming involved in fostering, the pandemic likely had unintended impacts on the study given the shortage of available dogs apparently caused by suddenly homebound people adopting pets in large numbers. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of animal rescues is a topic that should be investigated systematically in the future given that information on the topic at present is anecdotal.

Table 7

Correlations between the Subscales from the PROQOL (Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress) and the Predictor Variables (VFI and SCAP Subscales)

Predictor Variable		Criterion Variable		
		Compassion Satisfaction	Burnout	Secondary Traumatic Stress
VFI Protective	r	.262*	-0.052	-0.104
	N	61	60	62
VFI Values	r	0.011	0.137	0.120
	N	60	59	61
VFI Career	r	0.115	0.060	0.019
	N	61	60	62
VFI Social	r	0.179	-0.108	-0.121
	N	61	59	61
VFI Understanding	r	.278*	-0.051	-0.091
	N	60	59	61
VFI Enhancement	r	.265*	-0.046	-0.126
	N	61	60	62
SCAP Self-Care Professional Support	r	0.224	-0.216	-0.187
	N	60	60	61
SCAP Self-Care Professional Development	r	.527**	-.403**	-.281*
	N	60	60	61
SCAP Self-Care Life Balance	r	.568**	-.464**	-.361**
	N	60	59	61
SCAP Self-Care Cognitive Strategies	r	.321*	-.332**	-0.201
	N	60	60	61
SCAP Self-Care Daily Balance	r	0.118	-.404**	-.404**
	N	61	60	62

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8

PROQOL Descriptive Statistics for Groups Defined by Fostering Status

PROQOL Subscale		Currently Fostering	No Longer Fostering	Not Currently Fostering	Total
			Foster Status		
PROQOL-Compassion Satisfaction	N	41	18	1	60
	M	45.51	43.78	41.00	44.92
	SD	3.59	5.04		4.12
PROQOL-Burnout	N	40	18	1	59
	M	18.93	20.39	21.00	19.41
	SD	4.31	6.50		5.04
PROQOL-Secondary Traumatic Stress	N	42	18	1	61
	M	19.43	20.56	22.00	19.80
	SD	4.96	4.88		4.89

Table 9

VFI Descriptive Statistics for Groups Defined by Foster Status

VFI Subscale		Currently Fostering	No Longer Fostering	Not Currently Fostering	Total
			Foster Status		
VFI-Protective	N	43	18	1	62
	M	18.23	18.89	6.00	18.23
	SD	6.64	8.41		7.26
VFI-Values	N	42	18	1	61
	M	29.36	31.39	27.00	29.92
	SD	4.20	2.25		3.80
VFI-Career	N	43	18	1	62
	M	10.56	14.39	5.00	11.58
	SD	7.89	10.75		8.88
VFI-Social	N	42	18	1	61
	M	18.14	19.44	10.00	18.39
	SD	7.32	6.78		7.16
VFI-Understanding	N	42	18	1	61
	M	25.83	26.50	18.00	25.90
	SD	6.51	6.64		6.53
VFI-Enhancement	N	43	18	1	62
	M	22.26	23.00	10.00	22.27
	SD	6.13	8.10		6.84

Table 10
SCAP Descriptive Statistics for Groups Defined by Foster Status

SCAP Subscale		Currently Fostering	No Longer Fostering	Not Currently Fostering	Total
SCAP-Professional Support	N	42	18	1	61
	M	25.45	25.39	22.00	25.38
	SD	3.38	4.45		3.69
SCAP-Professional Development	N	42	18	1	61
	M	24.12	23.89	17.00	23.93
	SD	4.08	5.10		4.42
SCAP-Life Balance	N	42	18	1	61
	M	20.10	19.94	22.00	20.08
	SD	3.26	3.70		3.35
SCAP-Cognitive Strategies	N	42	18	1	61
	M	20.14	19.61	14.00	19.89
	SD	3.25	2.95		3.22
SCAP-Daily Balance	N	43	18	1	62
	M	12.56	12.06	17.00	12.48
	SD	4.11	3.95		4.05

The research questions explored in this study came primarily from my experiences as a foster provider and my conversations with others performing various roles in my rescue organization. A search of the available literature revealed a paucity of research on people, particularly volunteers, doing foster work with animals. As noted in the introduction to this report, recruiting and retaining foster providers is a challenge for rescues (Edge Research, 2017). This exploratory study was the result. My hope is that the findings will spark further research and discussion of ways to improve the process of on-boarding, training, and supporting foster providers to improve outcomes for rescue organizations.

The first question explored in this research concerned participants' motivations for fostering dogs. Not surprisingly, the most common motives reported involved a desire to help dogs and save the lives of dogs followed by simply loving and being passionate about them. Other motives included giving back, contributing to the greater good, and meeting unmet needs identified by rescues. Some participants indicated a desire to have dogs on a short-term basis. It was rare for participants to say they were trying out fostering as an alternate route to dog ownership. As foster "failure" or choosing to adopt one's foster(s) can be a problem for rescues as it can limit the ability for foster providers to take on new dogs, this was a motive I was particularly interested in pursuing. I will return to this issue when discussing reasons participants gave for no longer fostering.

Participants reported many rewards of fostering dogs the most prominent of which was the joy of seeing dogs in permanent homes with loving people. Participants often referred making a difference for the dogs they foster and for the people who adopt them. In addition, it was common for participants to write about the transformation dogs go through during their time in foster care. Many referred to enjoying watching their fosters come out of their shells and learn to just be dogs.

Some participants noted that they enjoy the novelty of meeting new dogs and the challenges presented by their unique personalities and backgrounds.

While participants saw clear benefits to fostering, they were also quite clear about the drawbacks. The most common difficulties noted by participants had to do with problem behaviors that are difficult to address. Many participants noted that dogs often come to them with little or no obedience training, poor socialization with humans and other animals, and/or with destructive behaviors. Many noted the difficulty of integrating a foster dog into their households which often include resident dogs and other pets. For some foster providers, particularly new ones with limited experience with dogs that have been abused, neglected, or that are poorly socialized, difficult dogs may be beyond their current abilities. This can be problematic for rescue organizations. In addition to potentially losing a foster provider due to bad experiences with dogs in their care, the dogs must be moved from foster to foster sometimes resulting in more trauma to the dogs and greater difficulty finding permanent homes.

In addition to behavioral challenges, many participants noted that it is painful to see the physical and psychological condition of many rescued dogs. I know the pain of this quite well as I have cared for fearful, unsocialized dogs that came from puppy mills. One of these dogs was so terrified that she would involuntarily defecate and urinate at the site of unfamiliar people, particularly men. Some participants expressed anger at the abuse and neglect inflicted by people resulting in problems that are sometimes very difficult if not impossible to correct. Many participants reflected on the preventable diseases and health problems faced by foster dogs sometimes necessitating euthanasia. For some foster providers, such experiences are incredibly painful.

As expected, many participants noted that it is frequently difficult to let dogs go when they have become attached to them. Given that the attraction to fostering for many volunteers is their love of dogs and their desire to make their lives better, this is not surprising. As argued by Hanrahan et al. (2018) and Bradshaw et al. (2012), caring for animals is shaped by the human-animal bond (HAB). At the same time, professionals in animal care are given very little education or training in the navigation of the impacts of the HAB (Hanrahan et al., 2018). The fact that volunteer fosters find becoming over-attached aversive, is a challenge for rescue organizations. In some cases, foster providers are unwilling to let go and decide to adopt their charges. While that is a good outcome for the individual dog, it means that dogs are not going to approved adopters and foster providers who "fail" may drop out because they no longer have room for additional dogs.

The final open-ended question concerned why participants were no longer fostering. The most common response was that they did not have room for any more dogs. Most participants citing this reason referred specifically to having adopted dogs they had fostered. In addition to "foster-failure", some participants stated that something had changed in their lives (e.g., housing, health, or relationship status) while others referred to their own dogs or other pets being intolerant of other dogs. In some cases, resident dogs had health issues or had become dog aggressive. For many participants who were no longer fostering, they stated they intend to foster in the future. These findings echo those reported by Maddie's Fund (2018).

Given the size of the sample and the fact that data collection took place in part during a global pandemic, the results related to the quantitative variables should not be interpreted as anything other than speculative. Many participants stopped responding after completing the open-ended questions. As a result, the sample size for the correlational analyses was quite small. In addition, the number of participants who were currently fostering far outpaced the number who were no

longer doing so. With those caveats in mind, there are some insights that can be gleaned from the findings.

First, higher compassion satisfaction scores were found to be associated with lower burnout scores. In other words, participants who experienced higher levels of burnout as volunteers felt less satisfaction with their work as care providers. According to Stamm (1995), compassion satisfaction reflects pleasure taken in doing successful care work while burnout (one element of compassion fatigue) involves frustration and hopelessness associated with work. Reflecting on the open-ended responses provides insight into this finding. The joys of fostering are centered on helping dogs become happy and finding them forever homes. That joy can be diminished by coping with the more frustrating and repetitive aspects of the work such as dog behavior problems or the uncertainty and ambiguity of finding quality adoptive homes.

In addition, burnout and secondary traumatic stress (the second component of compassion fatigue) were found to be positively correlated. In their open-ended responses, it was not uncommon for participants to mention frustration with seeing the same problems repeatedly or impatience with the foster/adoption process. Secondary traumatic stress refers to exposure to trauma experienced by others (Stamm, 1995). For people doing rescue work with dogs, avoiding exposure to traumatized, sick, and injured animals is virtually impossible. Many participants remarked on the pain they experienced seeing the horrible physical and emotional condition of some of the dogs they had cared for. Participants used words such as "heartbroken", "heartbreaking", "disgusting", and "horrifying" to describe the trauma experienced by their foster dogs. Several described the trauma they experience while caring for dogs going through heartworm treatments or struggling with other preventable diseases. Some described the death of animals in their care as particularly painful. It was also common for participants to express anger and revulsion directed at humans who had, through abuse and neglect, harmed animals in some cases irreparably. While the most common reasons for no longer fostering were not burnout and secondary traumatic stress, phrases associated with these concepts were clearly seen as downsides to the fostering experience that can have a cumulative negative effect.

As noted above, the results for the quantitative variables should be interpreted with care based on the sample size and the drop-out rate. Nevertheless, the findings provide some insights that may spur further research into risk and protective factors for foster care providers in animal rescue. Findings from research on secondary trauma and compassion fatigue in foster parents caring for human children echo those presented here. As noted by both Whitt-Woosley et al. (2020) and Hannah and Woolgar (2018), foster parents caring for children face routine exposures to trauma and that there are correlations between secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue, between those variables and intention to continue fostering, and between years doing the work and levels of secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue.

Compassion satisfaction was predicted by several aspects of both volunteer functions and self-care. Satisfaction with performing care work as a foster was positively associated with seeing volunteering as emotionally protective (e.g., working through one's own problems, escaping from one's troubles, relieving guilt, or feeing less lonely), as promoting understanding (e.g., learning by doing, learning to deal with different people, gaining new perspectives, or exploring one's strengths), and as a route to self-enhancement (e.g., feeling important, increasing self-esteem, feeling needed, and feeling connected). In terms of self-care, compassion satisfaction was positively associated with professional development efforts (e.g., staying current, maximizing time on enjoyable work, being involved in rescue activities, and engaging in activities that improve skills), maintaining life balance (e.g., spending time with friends and family, seeking comforting

activities, and fostering social connections, and using cognitive strategies to cope effectively (e.g., taking proactive steps to manage challenges, monitoring feelings, and being mindful of triggers).

Burnout and secondary traumatic stress were found to be negatively associated with several aspects of self-care. In other words, these are behaviors that people scoring higher in compassion fatigue are doing less often. Burnout was negatively correlated with enhancing professional development, maintaining life balance, using cognitive strategies, and maintaining daily balance (e.g., avoiding over-commitments, taking time for relaxation, and taking breaks). Similarly, secondary traumatic stress was negatively correlated with professional development, life balance, and daily balance.

As noted by Figley and Roop (2006) and Hanrahan et al. (2018), care work with animals comes with both risk and protective factors. In their open-ended responses, particularly to the questions concerning the positive and negative aspects of fostering, respondents referred to the potentially damaging stressors involved in fostering as well as the positives of personal growth and social connections. For rescue leaders who are tasked with recruiting and maintaining a stable group of volunteer foster providers, it may be helpful to give special attention to both the risks inherent in fostering including burnout and secondary traumatic stress while training and interacting with volunteers. In addition, it may be beneficial to provide instruction in and opportunities for engaging in self-care strategies that are useful in mitigating the stress involved in care work.

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Appendix
Content Analysis Coding Schemes

WHY FOSTER
1. Love dogs/animals (e.g., enjoyment, love, passionate)
2. Saving dogs' lives; helping dogs (e.g., euthanasia concern, concern for animal welfare, concern about bad shelter outcomes, help specific breed)
3. Benefits to dogs (e.g., chance at good home/new life/better life, chance to be successful, help fearful dogs, help dogs failed by people, change/correct behavior)
4. Greater good (e.g., want to give back, want to do my part, want to make a difference, I care, community benefit)
5. Recruited by others (e.g., spouse involved, family member involved, got progressively more involved, started with other animals moved to dogs)
6. Hospice/medical (e.g., hospice foster, medical foster, end of life care)
7. Response to abuse/maltreatment (abuse, neglect, mistreatment by breeders, hoarding)
8. Wanted to try it out (e.g., always wanted to, wanted to find a pet, way to expose kids to dogs)
9. Have time/skills/resources (e.g., kids now at college, am a vet tech)
10. Makes feel better (e.g., feel better, feeds the soul; get cuddles/love)
11. Cannot/don't want to adopt (e.g., Can't adopt, temporary companionship, not ready to adopt, no long-term commitment, rescue covers expenses)
12. Saw there was a need; learned how I could help (e.g., was asked to foster, rescue called for fosters)
13. Own dog (e.g., good at helping other dogs; have good pet, good for own dog; exercise for own dog)
14. COVID (e.g., home more with COVID, work at home because of COVID, COVID makes it possible)

POSITIVES OF FOSTERING
1. Good home/family (e.g., seeing dog in good/better home, updates from adopters, seeing families happy with dogs, help families, keeping in touch with families)
2. Seeing dogs flourish/recover/grow/thrive (e.g., seeing dogs happy, see dog come out of shell, see damaged dog heal, see dogs have new experiences, seeing change in dogs, healing sick dogs, giving good end of life care)
3. Meeting/helping new dogs (e.g., learning new dogs' personalities, getting to know dogs, building relationships with new/different dogs, getting to love on dogs, getting to enjoy dogs)
4. Love/appreciation from dog (e.g., love/appreciation from dog, unconditional love from dog)
5. Relationships with people in the rescue (e.g., making friends, rescue as family/community, wonderful people)
6. Made a difference (e.g., saved dog's life, gave dog a chance, helped abused/neglected dogs, helped raise dog, contributed to worthy cause, provided end of life care)
7. Gain training/teaching skills (e.g., learn about training, learn about dog behavior)
8. Foster failing as positive (e.g., usually end up keeping them)
9. Helping others see value of breed/rescued dog

NEGATIVES OF FOSTERING
1. Letting go (e.g., saying goodbye, getting attached, crying when they go, worrying about them, grieving)
2. Seeing dogs in pain/suffering (e.g., abuse/neglect/illness/injury; Seeing their sadness/fear/confusion, bad physical/mental conditions, puppy mill dogs, seeing how people treat animals, people who lie about dogs they surrender)
3. Struggling with dog behaviors (e.g., learning differences in needs, working on bad habits, untrained dogs, destructive behaviors, fearful/anxious behaviors, combative/aggressive dogs, high maintenance fosters, don't like the foster dog, foster dog doesn't mesh with you)
4. Disruption to home/routine (e.g., trouble adjusting to our rules, damage to house/possessions, time, money, limits ability to leave home)
5. Failing to save dogs (e.g., having to euthanize, having to put dogs to sleep (PTS), some dogs that can't be saved, when dogs die in your care, explaining that dog can't be saved)
6. Saying no (e.g., when don't have room, when have to say no)
7. Health/medical problems (e.g., heartworm, fleas/ticks, preventable illnesses, underweight/malnutrition, hospice dogs/senior dogs)
8. Problems with own dog(s) (e.g., foster not good with our dog(s), problems with our dog(s), disruption for our dogs)
9. Problems with organization (e.g., lack of information, drama with organization, not getting help from organization, disorganized organization, lack of training, wasn't told the truth)
10. Problems getting foster adopted (e.g., waiting for foster to be adopted, potential adopters/adopters returning dogs, failing to find right home)
11. House training (e.g., potty training, poop, cleaning up after puppies)
12. Foster failing
13. Problems/disagreements with potential adopters
14. No negatives

WHY STOPPED FOSTERING
1. Problems with own dogs/pets (e.g., own dogs have issues, concerns with other pets, have dog-aggressive dog, dogs became intolerant of other dogs)
2. No longer have room (e.g., foster failed and don't have room, adopted another dog and don't have room, too many dogs already)
3. Living situation changed (e.g., new baby, had to move, now live in apartment, apartment doesn't allow pets, community has dog limit, homeless)
4. Will foster again (e.g., foster again when current dog passes, plan to foster in future, need to take a break)
5. Decided would rather adopt
6. Still fostering (e.g., not applicable, still foster, limiting type of fostering)
7. Didn't like the people in the organization
8. Family/health issues (e.g., my health status, family member health)
9. Destruction of home (e.g., dogs destroyed my house)
10. Changed species (e.g., switched