

Personal Care - looking after yourself in order to better look after others.mp3

Gretchen [00:00:11] Hello there and welcome to Wildlife Heroes Caring for the Carers. The podcast that takes care of wildlife volunteers. There are over 15,000 wildlife volunteers around the country. So the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife is aiming to start a mental health conversation around the five key topics that worry you the most. Community conflict, catastrophic events supporting others, anxiety around climate change and today, personal well-being. And we're recording this during an unprecedented time for the world, for Australians and for wildlife carers on the frontline. Coping after a terrible summer of droughts and fires and floods and now dealing with the COVID-19 corona virus.

Gretchen [00:00:59] So some of our guests are being remotely recorded for self-quarantine purposes and their voices will sound a little bit different because of that. So today we're asking, what can you do to look after yourself on a regular basis so that you can keep on doing this thing that you love?

Gretchen [00:01:17] How can you identify when the stress is getting too much? In each episode, we'll get to know an individual wildlife volunteer around our main theme. And then with a guest psychologist or mental health expert, we'll look at how that situation might reflect broader experiences in the care community.

Gretchen [00:01:38] I'm Gretchen Miller. I'm an audio documentary maker, and I've long been talking about our relationship with the wild, with experts and unique individuals from all walks of life. On this episode, we welcome Suzy Nethercott-Watson, a carer for 20 years and the director of Two Green Threads, a website built specially to support wildlife volunteers in the work they do. And we've got Sharon Draper, animal lover and Sydney based psychologist, with a particular interest in trauma and compassion fatigue and who works using a number of therapies in a holistic way. Suzy, let's start with you. Tell us about your caring. Where did you start?

Suzy [00:02:20] Thanks, Gretchen. It's one of those life journeys, I think you look back on and try and work out well, what was the moment where it all commenced? I think I've always had an affinity and interest in animals. And after moving into a rural property, driving along country roads, you are often seeing impacted wildlife, cars, etc. and there was a chance meeting one day at a local show where I've walked past the local wildlife group with a little stand basically, and I realised that there was organisations that actually directly assisted the wildlife in those sort of circumstances. And I joined up. And from that moment, I had started a wildlife caring journey that has become fundamentally important to me. It means a lot in terms of being able to connect to the environment.

Suzy [00:03:08] And I started with the general courses, and then I broke into a specialisation in macropod and also wombats, and particularly at the end that we call pinkie's, which are the tiny, tiny little furless babies that are very intense, these animals. So, yeah, that's basically where I started. And I've been doing it since then and it has occupied a considerable part of my life.

Gretchen [00:03:32] And when you go about your caring duties as you're handling these tiny little creatures, what's the primary feeling that you have in your heart, is it tenderness is it protectiveness? What does it bring you emotionally doing this work?

Suzy [00:03:48] That's a very good question. I think a little bit of both. There's a level of vulnerability that you see in what you're looking after. And I think one of the lucky experiences I have as a wildlife carer is I can take them all the way through to release. And so seeing the journey from that tiny little animal through to something that reconnects and joins its nature and its environment is a pretty special journey. So at the beginning, when they're tiny, definitely their vulnerability triggers a level of like you said, tenderness and need to support a little being that effectively needs everything done for it. But I guess also, I don't know if it's a description of a feeling. I'm sure Sharon will be out to tell but that there's this level of connectedness, a level of looking into this little being's eyes and realising that that lives in the wild and in the environment, in nature. And I get to have a special part in trying to help this little being move through a journey that wasn't its own fault in terms of why it came into a human world and where it can eventually come out to and where it's supposed to be. So I'm constantly driven by knowing that it's got to go back to nature. And a lot of people say 'I don't know how you can ever let them go.' Well, that's actually the point. They don't belong with us in our world. They belong in the environment. Where they were born should have been. So connectedness and a level of triggering of gentleness and stillness that that brings about. The stillness, that's a really powerful image there.

Gretchen [00:05:19] Sharon, coming to you. What makes a wildlife carer? What kind of person cares for this quite tricky group of more than human creatures on our planet?

Sharon [00:05:32] Absolutely. The people that tend to become carers, altruistic, compassionate, they're sensitive to themselves and the environment that they live in, as well as people who have an affinity to animals in particular often do become carers or they'd like to at least. So it's that type of personality just that helper seeing more than just themselves seeing the world that they live in and the community that they are part of and trying to or wanting to help? So that altruism is an important part of that kind of personality.

Sharon [00:06:03] And, you know, a lot of people, which I know will get to tend to be very compassionate towards others, whatever helping profession you're in. There's compassion and empathy, being able to try and understand what a person or a little being could be going through and wanting to help. So kindness is something that's important as well. But compassion takes it a step further and empathy takes it another step further where you're actually wanting to try and help the person who's in that pain. But the thing with that is that in order to be able to understand that compassion and really feel that compassion, you have to understand that kind of pain within yourself in order to be able to really connect with that being that is going through whatever it's going through.

Gretchen [00:06:43] I think that's a really important point. You understand pain. So you're a highly sensitive person who is very empathic. You feel the pain of others. Can that become overwhelming?

Sharon [00:06:56] So exhaustion is a big one, which unfortunately, a lot of these symptoms you feel anyway feeling tired. I'm sure Suzy can relate. You know, when you're looking after a little animal, that you need to feed every hour. I mean, you're not really sleeping as well as you would. So there is a level of exhaustion, but this will be more accumulative build-up of symptoms. So the exhaustion, feeling like you want to checkout as well, feeling like you're just not coping. And even you might be saying to yourself, like, I'm not coping, I can't do this, I need to get away or whatever it is. That's when you start noticing the way you talk to yourself and the way you're feeling overwhelmed, then that's starting the slippery slope of going into a place that you're not going to feel like you're able

to actually cope and do the work that your wanting to do. So exhaustion is a big one, just really feeling like you just aren't able to cope anymore. Getting quite irritable with the people around you, wanting to check out of society, not wanting to connect with friends or spend time with people. And that's a tricky one, too, especially with wildlife carers, because I think a lot of people that I know that I work with who love animals, a lot of them start saying things like, I hate people or I don't like people, which is a problem, too, because it's important to be able to integrate and connect with people that are caring as well as animals.

Gretchen [00:08:11] I have heard many wildlife carers say, oh, I really love animals, people, not so much. And I reckon there might be a few listening now who think, oh yeah, that's me. Now it's almost a point of pride, I think. But might it be something just to not to criticise, but to look at yourself and say, okay, I feel that way. But is that necessarily a good thing?

Sharon [00:08:36] Absolutely. I think it's really important to be able to just recognise where that's coming from. Of course, if you have received an animal that you're looking after that's been knocked over by a car or something like that, it's quite easy to be able to kind of blame somebody else or think that humans are causing this trauma for animals and wildlife. But by blaming or trying to sort of isolate yourself from humans when we are humans ourselves and we need to stick together, we need to try and find a way that we can overcome that feeling in the sense of, well, maybe we need to go out into the community to teach people or to try and help them understand the impact that humans are having. Like with climate change, you know, is something that maybe you could do to try and help the process along or help teach other people to really get them to see and become more conscious of their actions and how they impact wildlife.

Suzy [00:09:25] Sharon in terms of them saying that we have about an animal person and not a people person. Gretchen, you talked about sometimes it is an element of pride and sometimes we sort of use it as an either or so we're either an animal person or a people person. And I think it's okay to be both. I think sometimes in volunteering organisations across all not for profits, but it does exist in wildlife carrying communities as well. We sometimes use that I'm an animal person, not a people person, as a shield for how we interact and talk with one another. And I think that's where it sort of comes back to having a level of awareness that you can still get on with people or enjoy the company of individuals and still be an animal person, that doesn't have to be a either or situation.

Gretchen [00:10:11] And I think we should acknowledge, too, that often people turn to animals when they've been hurt by humans themselves. And this is a rational response. Animals accept us with all our faults and flaws, and they also don't hold onto the history that we hold on to. So if you have had terrible experiences with humans, perhaps as a child, it makes sense to turn to animals. But again, that isolation with animals might not serve you so well all of the time.

Sharon [00:10:42] It's it's a balance, again, because there's that unconditional love. And I love what Suzy was saying about that connection, being able to look into their eyes. And there's some research that they've done where oxytocin is a feel good hormone, it's a bonding hormone. It's usually only really between sort of the mother and the baby. But what they've discovered is if you look at, say, your dog as an example of your pets and your staring at your dog and your dog's looking back at you, you're building oxytocin between you and you're building that bond. And the more you kind of look at it and the

more it looks at you, you kind of keep bonding through and building that hormone. So that's like a different species to us, which is amazing.

Gretchen [00:11:19] Suzy, can I ask you if you recognise in yourself in your 20 odd years of caring, whether you've ever experienced compassion fatigue and burnout.

Suzy [00:11:31] Thanks Gretchen that's a complex question. And I don't know if it's just me, but I really shy away from badging myself with compassion fatigue or having even the capacity to have it sort of scares me in a way because of what it might mean about where I fit. And I know that one of the elements that started me on a journey of creating Two Green Threads was a level of awareness about the risk factors that we face in the wildlife caring community that make us very susceptible to mental health and obviously physical health elements as well. And I think I get a little bit confused sometimes between the intersection between burnout and compassion fatigue, because there is a nature in the work that we do that a lot of us take on an awful lot. And there is a great need for looking after the wildlife and assisting them in this current world of major difficulties. And so there's a hefty workload from that point of view.

Sharon [00:12:24] Thanks so much for sharing that, Suzy, because I'm sure a lot of people can relate to that. And in the community that I work with, whether it's wildlife carers or other people, I find a lot of people are really personally don't like boxing people in or labelling people either with a diagnosis as such, because that can be problematic as well, because you can kind of succumb to it, too, like I'm an anxious person, rather than I'm experiencing anxiety right now or I'm feeling fatigued right now. So I love that you highlighted that because I think a lot of people will relate to it. I think I'd like to talk a bit about compassion fatigue, burnout and vicarious trauma, because there's a lot of overlap with that. And it is quite confusing, but more just to have an understanding of it, not to necessarily translate yourself into a box, more just being aware that there is such a thing so that you don't feel so alone, that there is something that people experience when we're doing this kind of work. So I'll just start with burnout. Burnout can occur in any kind of setting. So you could be sort of in a corporate nine to five job and you're just feeling really overworked it is just too much work of a workload or you are working longer hours. You can develop burnout in that way. And just that you're feeling exhausted from an emotional, psychological or physical level. So it's that fatigue, again, that you do feel, but it's more specific it can be any kind of role you play or any kind of work related role you have. And the thing with burnout is it can be rectified fairly easily in the sense, you know, you just talk to your boss and say, I can't work after hours or something like that or I need less of a workload. And then once that's adjusted, you can feel better again. With compassion fatigue. It's usually in the helping professions where people can develop that absolute fatigue in the sense that you feel like you can't go on anymore. You can't do the things that you were doing that giving, giving, giving and kind of your emotional reserves start depleting so much that you feel like you've got nothing to give anymore. And like I said before, with compassion fatigue, it can kind of flow into feelings of guilt and then shame as well, which, like I said, was quite problematic. If you stop believing that you're not a good person or you're not good at caring. And then vicarious trauma is where you have experienced trauma, you don't have to have experienced it directly. But it could be an animal that's come in that has experienced trauma and you experience it in a vicarious way. So sort of like a secondary way. But what that does is if you get exposed to that over a prolonged period, you start developing a shift in your world view. So you start feeling like the world isn't a good place anymore. And that's also very problematic because then that can just kind of blanket your experience from a day to day perspective from then on. So it's quite important to just be aware of the warning signs and that sense. But I really love that

you said that, Suzy, in the sense that a lot of people don't want to label themselves and also because they feel like it would be a badge, like you said, or like a mark, you know, against your name. And I find a lot of wildlife carers as well they feel that they can't be honest about how they're feeling to members of the community because they're afraid that they won't be able to, or people in their organisation that they're working for, will not let them look after animals anymore. And that's what they do. So I think there's a lot of fear based around that that people won't really understand. And therefore, a lot of people keep it to themselves.

Gretchen [00:15:35] I think we've just had a really interesting and complex look at some of the mental health experiences that wildlife carers have and we'll get in a minute to some top tips really for coping with some of this. But before we do, there's just one other kind of primary experience that I think wildlife carers will have. And in that, what they do is literally a matter of life and death. There are very particular stresses and very particular kinds of grief that a wildlife volunteer carer might feel. Could we outline some of those feelings of grief? So we've looked at compassion fatigue and burnout. What about grief? What are some of the grief experiences that volunteers might feel?

Sharon [00:16:17] There are apparently 18 forms of grief.

Gretchen [00:16:18] 18 different forms of feeling terrible.

Sharon [00:16:21] But I think it's important not to overwhelm people with information to like, oh, which grief have I got? I think it's just important if you're feeling like understanding what grief is and being able to grieve is recognising the loss that you felt. And I think it's important with wildlife carers, and I think Suzy can understand this as well. I'm sure there's disenfranchised grief where a lot of other people who may be aren't in this community don't necessarily understand. I think it's important to understand that that a lot of the time not everyone can fully understand what you're going through. But it doesn't mean that what you're going through is silly or you shouldn't be feeling this way for an animal. So I think it's important to be aware that grief is important. It's part of our living, part of our experience as people and as beings, sentient beings. And I think with grief it's about giving yourself permission to grieve. And what grief really is is being able to let it out. Expressing that in some way, some people might not feel they can talk to others about it. And I would encourage people to try and find maybe one person, just one like a mentor or a close friend, that you can kind really nurture that relationship if you feel safe with them, you know, try to find another human that you can talk to about it. It is really important. But the other thing is you can try and express it in some way, let yourself cry, paint something if that makes sense to you, write it out like, you know, allow yourself to feel those feelings and try not to let any ignorant, maybe extended society remark about not being able to feel the grief. Kind of let that go if you can. Because like I said before, we have this bonding experiences with animals and they're part of our lives. And I think as soon as you start allowing yourself to be able to recognise that you're allowed to express your feelings when you feel sorrow and loss, then you are able to walk through it to move through it. A lot of people talk about like, how do I get over grief? And you really don't get over it. You just go through it. You've got to allow yourself to express whatever you're feeling.

Suzy [00:18:19] So just picking up on what Sharon said, and it's so helpful to hear other people say it and particularly professionals that should be reminding us about how to look after ourselves in times which are often in a wildlife caring experience, occurring regularly in terms of loss of animals. Sharon started out talking about 18 different forms of grief. And quite rightly, we don't have to concentrate on the fact that there are that many. But there is

a published CSIRO study that actually indicates that wildlife carers experience 15 of the 18 different types in the sorts of work that we do. And I think for me, grief is a large component of this whole journey with wildlife. In my experience, because I look after Eastern Grey Kangaroos predominantly, and I've got to say I have no idea how that species survives because they are so stressful and are really, really, really difficult to raise in terms of the success rate and what happens to them in care. But I think there's a combination of trauma and grief that often intersects. And so you may lose an animal and there's the loss that Sharon indicated and trying to work through what that means. But there's often a layer of that vicarious trauma about what this little being has been through or if it's the experience that happened, has happened in care. What were their feelings, how hurt they would have been, if a dog came and was running around the enclosure and eventually they suffered from capture myopathy or something. There's a level of trauma in your grief process that is sometimes I think it's interwoven really, really strongly because you put yourself in the place of the animal and what they've experienced and it becomes such a strong and overwhelming feeling to try and work out what role you had in it, or whether you're just effectively putting yourself into that position of what that animal has gone through. I remember having a conversation with a friend carer one day when we had obviously many years ago when it rained. There was a massive downpour one afternoon and we were chatting about something a few hours later and she was in nearly tears going, you know it went through an area of my property where I know all of the mob lives and part of my enclosure. And I was picturing what the animals were going through and I just can't stop thinking about them. So I think there's that really perfection that makes it sort of complex process when we go through it. I'm taking aside whether we've got an element of self blame that we somehow want to put in there as well.

Gretchen [00:20:39] So we wouldn't be here to talk about personal care if wildlife carers weren't who they were. Self care might be a bit easier if they were less inclined to put the animals first. But they do struggle to look after themselves. What are your top tips as a carer for coping with the pressure of daily care? And you're actually in one, of course, the highest pressure, caring sectors looking after the little ones.

Suzy [00:21:03] I guess I'd have to start with saying I don't think I have some sort of silver bullet magic list of if you follow the following five tips, everything will be okay. And I guess one of the first things I can say is that we touched on this before. There's a level of self compassion and self awareness that recognises that self care is even needed. But I know that from a value basis, I have a value of service and service to others. So it's sort of contradictory in a way to therefore go, oh, well, what about me and how am I doing it? And one of the sort of logic things that I've come to, it's one of the fundamental principles of Two Green Threads is I would like to be able to look after wildlife for as long as I possibly can. There's a world where wildlife are increasingly going to need our help in terms of what's going on with habitat and climate, etc. And so I want to be there for as long as possible. So if I want to do that, I'm going to have to work out how I get some sense of myself that is sustainable and can continue into that longer sense. So I think probably my first tip would be to have a conversation with yourself and look inside and have a level of self awareness about where your narrative exists, about self care. I know that I struggle with it. And I think that's why I constantly have to read my own Two Green Threads advice, because it is something I have to go. No, I'm gonna have to do something that makes sure that I can be here tomorrow and grab an hour's sleep, etc.. So that would probably be my first tip. And I think my second tip would be that your level of self care strategies are actually going to be very, very specific to your world and your journey with wildlife. What sort of species you do, what that involves, how much you're involved in other elements of the wildlife community or other areas of your work or your family, etc, etc. And so for me,

for example, one of the things I've come to as a level of understanding is if I get myself really, really, really organised, then I can lessen the sense of anxiousness and potential stress about things that might go wrong. And so I've worked out. I mean, they sound a bit silly in a way. I don't know if they're going to be real tips in how they come across to people. But when I was taking my animals into work all the time, I would make sure that I had double of everything at work. So if the bottle tipped over when I went to feed at lunchtime, I didn't go through a oh, my god, how am I going to feed this animal? Because I live 50 minutes away so I can't race home and grab some more milk. So I'd have double of everything. I'd have things in the car that if something went wrong, I forgot the teats one day or something. So a level of self organisation, depending on what's going on in your life and what that means is just one of the ways that I've crafted my own level of self care. And I think that's something also that Sharon picked up on before, and that is surrounding yourself with finding people that you can connect with, that you can discuss this journey with, because there are even I think I'm assuming I kind of speak from a place where I've ticked off self care to the ultimate level. But if there are people that are feeling that they're doing that, that the reality is you don't live in this sort of constant middle state where everything's balanced and okay, you sort of have bad days and that's okay. And you can have other days where you are trying to ensure that there's something in it that helps sustain your own physical or mental or emotional wellbeing, you know, forcing yourself to have a cup of tea outside on the deck or actually ringing someone and going 'I'm having a low resilience day', as I often say, to a very good friend of mine. And we don't necessarily have to explain all the ins and outs of that.

Gretchen [00:24:41] That is absolutely wonderful. And of course, the point is that what works for you in terms of self care may not work at all for someone else. I do think in some ways it's useful to think, okay, well, here are some ideas. Which ones work for me?

Sharon [00:24:56] Absolutely. And you're spot on and what works for Suzy might not work for somebody else, but having a guideline can really help to start the ball rolling for you. But what I would encourage people to do is try to get to know yourself, know what your triggers are. Know what your sensitivities are. Know what makes you feel good. Know what you can do that can help build up your emotional reserves. If you've been in a situation in the past, it was quite challenging. What did you do to try and overcome that? Often using past references can be really helpful and build up confidence and being able to overcome this challenge that we faced with at the moment. So it's hard to really encourage people to try and get to know who they are as a person. What are their values? What are their needs? What do they need to help calm themselves? And something that I find with just all people and every single person has a nervous system. And what's really, really, really important is for us to learn ways to try and manage that nervous system, because when we're feeling stressed or anxious, we tend to overthink things and to have circular thinking that really doesn't have an end. And then what happens with that is we excrete all the hormones that are stress hormones and then we start feeling more panicked and then we can't sleep properly. And it's just it all affects every part of our life. So I'd encourage people to understand themselves and where do they feel stressed? Like, do you feel it in your stomach? Like a knot in your stomach? Do you feel like pain in your chest? Do you find you breathe shallowly? Do you start getting a headache? Just try to understand what symptoms you have when you're in that state and then learn ways to try and calm your nervous system first. I think everybody in the world needs to learn ways to calm themselves. And the most I find important or easiest kind of way is deep breath. We mustn't underestimate the importance of breathing deeply from our diaphragm because that can slow everything down. So we aren't able to stop our heart beating as fast. But by breathing deeply, that can slow the heart rate. And when you're slowing that down, you

can feel calmer and then you can think more clearly as to what you need to do. But when we in that panicked, stressed fight or flight state, we can't think clearly, can't think rationally. So I'd really encourage people to find ways that they can implement on a daily basis where they can relax themselves like deep breathing.

Gretchen [00:27:17] If you are a wildlife carer listening to this, you're going to have your own ideas about what works for you. But I think what's important there is to spend some time thinking about what they might be and what might work for you. But we do have some ideas. And Suzy from Two Green Threads has just uploaded a information sheet called Take Care to Give Care, which has a list of prompts on it.

Suzy [00:27:41] It breaks it into a series of ABC which is awareness, balance and connection. And it talks about those ABCs as the sort of elements of resilience and stepping through each of these has to be connected to a conversation we had earlier, really specific to our own world and what we're sort of going through. But if we have the categories of awareness, balance and connection, then you can start a bit of a list ok well, what are my self care elements? And the first is under awareness, the sorts of things that we talked about, what are the bits of our lives in terms of wildlife caring that we need to have a greater level of self awareness on? And what are our triggers and what does it mean in terms of how much we're doing compared to other things in our life? I know, for example, that I made a conscious self care decision in my wildlife caring journey a number of years ago. For 10 years, I had done regular shift as part of answering the 24/7 phone number that the public rings for assistance for wildlife as part of my wildlife group. And I realised after 10 years of it that I really got myself into a massive psychological state leading up to that shift, during that shift and after that shift in terms of what it meant for me, because I'm a very visual person. And so I was picturing a lot of what was going on. And I made a really conscious decision not to continue with that role, to make sure that I was assisting the organisation in other ways. But that was a personal decision of mine. I know other people that love doing the phone roster because there's a level of connection with public and a discussion element that really matters to them. So I think a level of awareness is trying to sort of go through an understanding of what are your stress signals? What are your triggers and Sharon said that before. I think sort of during an exercise that takes that through for you in the balance for example, there's something in your day, in the 24 hours, it may be five minutes, it might be two. it might be 20. But you need to do something that takes you out of an utter immersion into focus and attention and support to wildlife, something that is, this is the way I would express it, I'm sure Sharon will have opinions that gives your physical and mental being just a little bit of relief and space and difference and stillness, that can be a break from that. And if that for you is. maybe it's a cup of tea on the deck. I really have to force myself to do exercise. I know it's a fundamental physical self care element but I have to do it. And every now and again, I go, god damn it, I am going to go for a walk. So I think picking up on what is that physical experience that you can do as part of balance. And then in connection, as we've talked about before, you do have to have some sort of connection with other people. It doesn't matter that we are motivated to support and look after wildlife and mother animals. We are innate social beings and there is something about connecting with other people. So what are the ways that you are doing that and sort of mapping out what's your social ecosystem? How many people are you intersecting with at what sort of level? And what are you getting from that in terms of your own physical well-being and capacity to feel supported and be able to talk through things? And how do you converse with them? And do you do it very often and make sure that you do? So a level of self care that says, I think I'm isolating, isolating, isolating, I'm going to make some phone calls to some people I love and trust and just have a conversation.

Gretchen [00:31:03] Sharon, to finish off, if you're feeling like things are getting really hard. You're actually not able to look after yourself. You just don't have the capacity. What are some of the things that you can do in terms of seeking more professional help?

Sharon [00:31:18] Yeah, it's really important to be able to speak to your doctor just to see if they have any recommendations of people that they would recommend from a mental health perspective. I have a lot of people who kind of don't see a psychologist because of the sort of stigma attached to it. But nobody even needs to know about it. I always say to clients, it's just a space where you can check out of your life. And so that you can actually look at what's going on. So you can see it a bit more clearly, like what I need to tweak to try and help myself feel better. And then you go back into your life and you implement the strategies or the discussions that we've had in that hour. So I think it's imperative that everybody deserves a space that they can just check out of their life for a bit. And if you can see it like just a space where you're talking to a person who's impartial and it's confidential, then if you can see it in that way, then I think that can be really helpful, because then I think you'd use the process to your advantage. But the ways around that is really you can literally Google psychologists in your area and then you can send them an email to enquire. But if you do speak to your doctor, they can write a mental health care plan. And then what that does is it, depending on the psychologist you want to see, can either give you a rebate or it could give you a bulk billing session, which means you won't have to pay for the session at all. You can get ten free sessions if you go to a bulk billing therapist per year. If you've got that care plan from the doctor. So I'd really encourage people to just talk to the doctor about the options and then the doctor can often recommend therapies to them as well.

Suzy [00:32:44] And I think picking up on that was something Sharon said really early on in the recording. And I think that's the sort of commitment that we need to make to one another, that there shouldn't be this level of fear of admitting the fact that the journey that we go on with our wildlife actually does have any impact on us. I mean, goodness me, where people that feel and are connected and doing something for other people. And I think we need to lessen that for one another and make sure that we commit to and as a community being able to have those conversations, that doesn't get you marked as someone that's not coping, that's just not fair or appropriate. Again, it doesn't have to be an either or. This is about trying to work out how we do this to the best possible life so we can be around for the longest time to do it. So if that means talking to someone professionally, then go for it. I don't think there's anything wrong with that and let's destigmatize that element.

Gretchen [00:33:34] Well, there's so much more to discuss we are just at the beginning of this conversation. But I hope from here our listeners feel they might have some resources that they can call upon. Sharon Draper psychologist, and Suzy Nethercott-Watson, thank you both so much for your time.

Gretchen [00:33:50] You can find Two Green Threads, Suzy's website that's been set up to assist carers in their own self care at twogreenthreads.org

Gretchen [00:34:07] And you can keep up to date with what's happening with wildlife heroes at wildlifeheroes.org.au I'm a terrible speller. Don't forget to like us on your podcast app. Spread the word to anyone you think will find this helpful. And from us here at Wildlife Heroes Caring for the Carers. I'm Gretchen Miller, and I'll see you next time.