

First Name

Paraskevi

Last Name

Skrempou

Email

pskrempou@yahoo.com

Affiliation

ET school (STUDENTS only)

Affiliation Name

Alypias Techni - University of Thessaly

Affiliation Country

Greece

Main Themes

Future perspectives of existential therapy

Keywords

Self-care, pet care, aging, illness, disasters

Title

"Taking Care of the Caregiver: The Importance of Self-Care in Pet Care - A Pilot Study on Greek Volunteers and Guardians Managing Aging, Illness, or Disasters.

Abstract for

Long Presentation

Abstract

Caring for a sick pet is a profoundly emotional and demanding experience that combines the caregiver's well-being with the pet's recovery. While prioritizing the health of a beloved animal companion, pet owners often neglect their physical, emotional, and mental needs, leading to caregiver burnout, anxiety, and stress. This presentation is about highlighting the importance of self-care in such scenarios while emphasizing that maintaining one's health is essential not only for effective caregiving but also for navigating the deeper existential challenges posed by illness.

The connection between sickness and existential themes reveals a shared journey between pet and owner in the face of life's uncertain path. Sickness often confronts caregivers with the reality of vulnerability, impermanence, and the fragility of life, evoking profound introspection on the nature of the human-animal bond. Furthermore, the act of rescuing animals from disasters is connected to reflections on responsibility, ethical duty, purpose, mortality, interconnection, suffering, and the nature of freedom and choice. Similarly, caregiving for aging or terminally ill pets often evokes anticipatory grief and a profound awareness of the limits of human control over life and death.

This pilot study investigates the self-care practices and challenges faced by Greek volunteers and pet guardians engaged in animal welfare during critical situations. By practicing self-care—such as seeking emotional support—caregivers can sustain the resilience needed to provide compassion and comfort without depleting their own resources. Discussion on this topic serves as a foundation for further studies on the interconnected relationship between caregiver well-being and the quality of care provided to animals, their impact on animal care outcomes.

Short Biographical Note - Paraskevi Skrempou

Paraskevi Skrempou is a Greek Psychologist and trainee integrative psychotherapist. She has fulfilled her master of science degree in Clinical Mental Health, graduating with excellence (Grade: 9.60/10). Currently pursuing advanced training in Integrative Psychotherapy at the University of Thessaly, with a focus on existential, systemic, and multicultural approaches. She provides individual and group psychotherapy for children, adolescents and adults and experiential workshops in line with her psychotherapy training, as well. She is also certified in Art Therapy and emotional trauma management, with ongoing participation in professional workshops and active volunteer work, such as actively supporting healthcare professionals and vulnerable populations during crises in non- governmental organizations.

Last but not least, she is the scientific lead of the "Suppawrt" project, which focuses on providing psychological support and care for pet owners in need.

User ID

Paraskevi Skrempou