

# Connecting to Collections Care Online Community

A Focus on Mental Health

# Research Background

Over 82 interviews

33% Survivors

33% Family Members of Survivors or Victims

33% Community Members

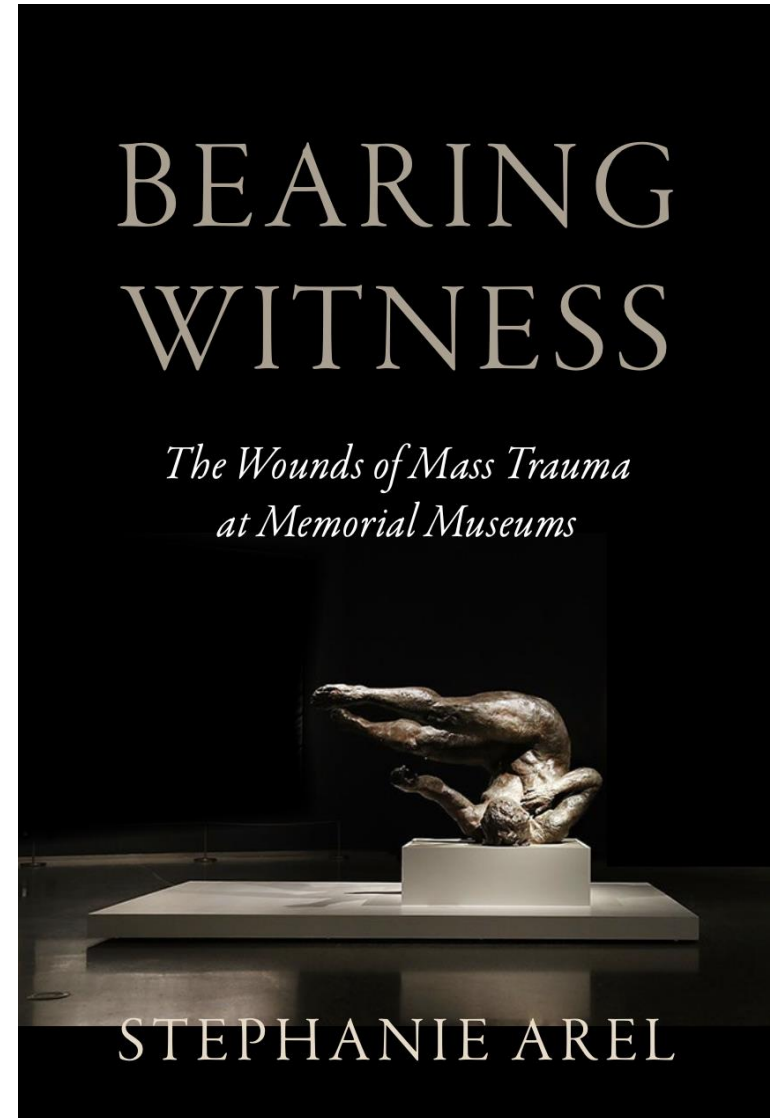
10 Countries 19 MM

Staff ranged –

Security, Research, Collections, Guides, Exhibitions, Visitor Services, Public Relations, Retail, Executive Team, Volunteer Services, Oral Historians, etc.

Questions from three categories:

1. Background at institution, nature of engagement with content (material and people) and meaning of the work
2. Trauma history, either independent from or inclusive of the trauma commemorated at the specific site
3. Worker's needs



# Focus Groups and Central Concerns (AIC initiated)

**January 17, 2024**  
**18 Participants**  
**Afternoon**

- Being judged by other conservators (lack of empathy in the field, competitiveness, lowered self-worth)
- Enduring high levels of responsibility – understaffed
- Having leadership that are not conservators (or are and not trained)
- Possessing little control of what is happening in the organization
- Moving frequently
- Distressing lack of address by the institution to the external environment, i.e. politics

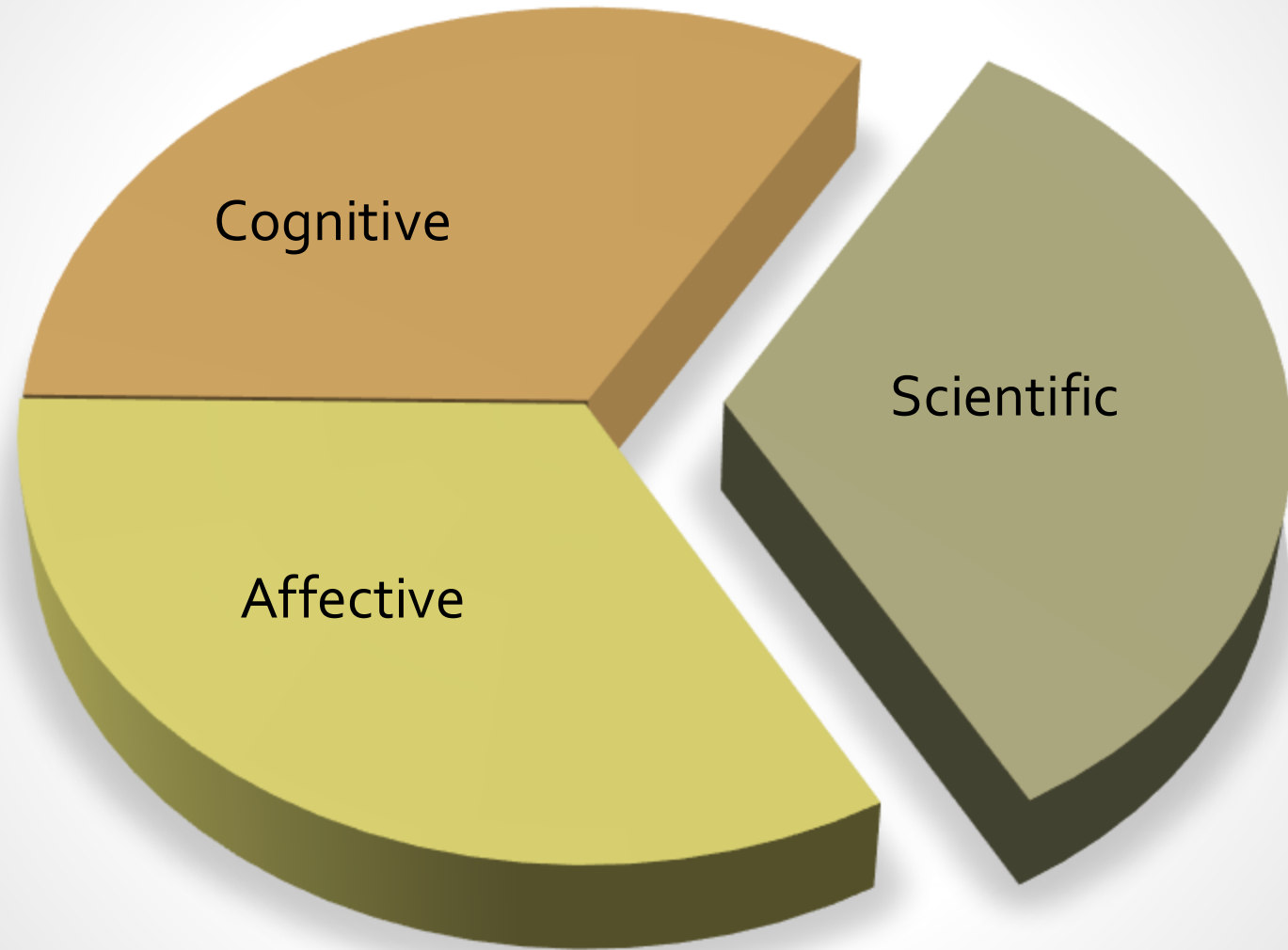
**January 25, 2024**  
**12 Participants**  
**Evening**

- Earning little/not sufficient money
- Witnessing the hierarchical arrangements of the field
- Needing skill sets beyond conservation
- Wanting to be recognized



Further  
Observations

# Domains of Knowledge and Experience



# Ethical Fatigue

Emotional depletion from the need to navigate ethical dilemmas and make moral decisions in changing environments



Primarily emerging out of research with Veterinarians



Constant decision making the affects the well-being of others/history



Moral conflict – personal values clash with professional duties



High stakes - i.e. political or financial decisions having significant consequences



Lack of support – from the institution, colleagues, or the community



Resource constraints

# Fear, Imposter Syndrome, Perfectionism

An affect signifying threat, danger, or insecurity manifesting in the fear of being judged, the fear of being exposed, and the fear of failure.



Fear of Failure – excessive self-criticism and doubt about abilities



Self-doubt and anxiety – making mistakes and falling short of high standards



Negative self-talk – distorted thinking patterns, magnify mistakes and discount achievements



Avoidance behaviors – seeking temporary relief through over-preparation and seeking reassurance from others



Stress, anxiety, and burnout

*Cultivating self-awareness, practicing self-compassion, challenging negative beliefs, seeking support from others, and setting realistic goals are some effective ways to address these issues and cultivate a healthier mindset.*



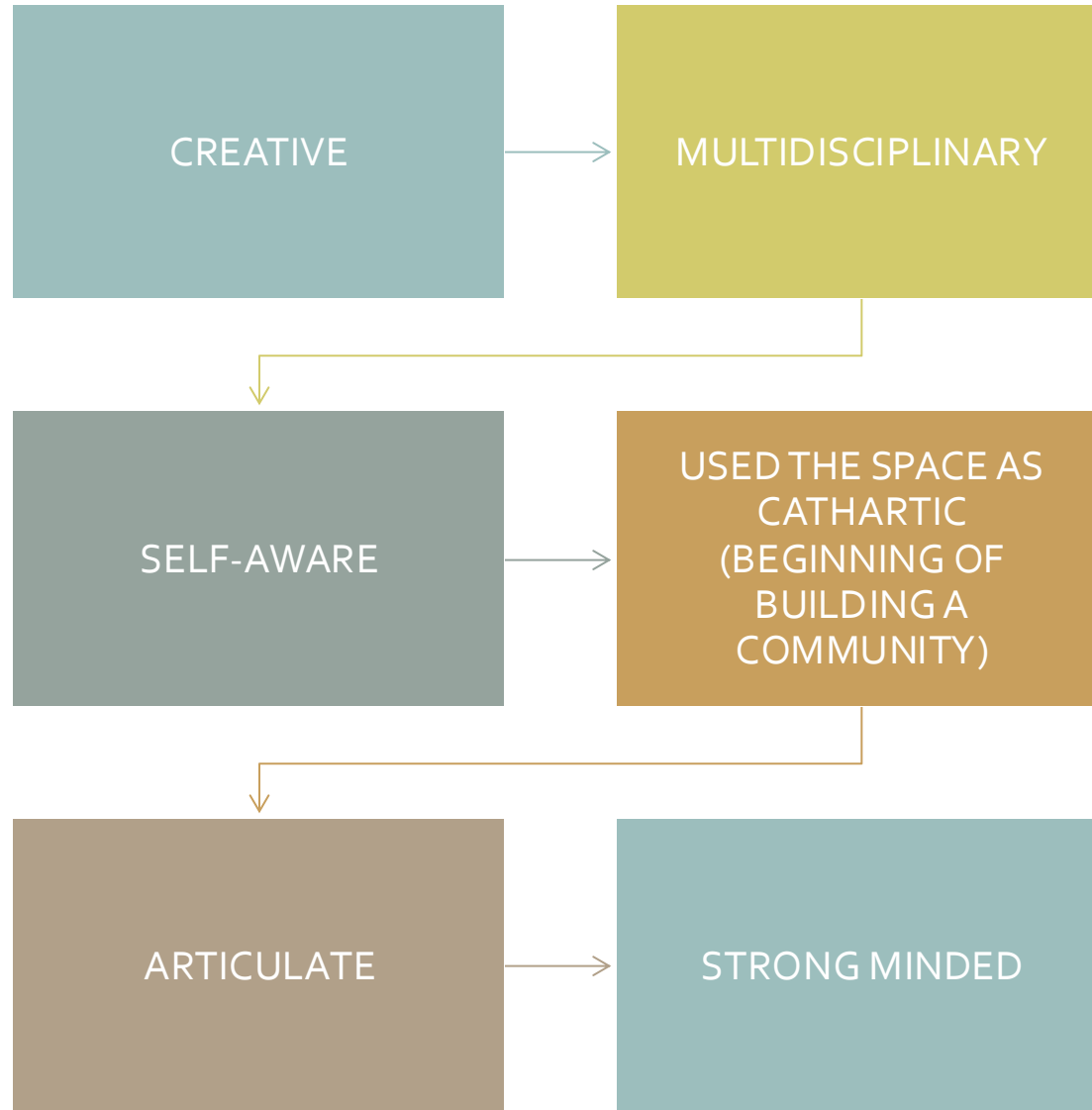
A row of wooden figures, with one red figure standing out in the center. The figures are arranged in a line, receding into the distance. The background is a light blue gradient.

# The State of Being Alone

*Perpetuated by a culture with competitiveness, issues with identity and a sense of belonging, withdrawal due to somatic symptoms, mental health struggles, and shame.*



# Strengths



Recommendations



# Build Community

Create

Create some means to emotionally bolster peers, i.e. those who move, those struggling to find full time jobs

Generate

Generate support for career shifts that may not be typical – (cultivating a culture of respect).

Develop

Develop a mentoring program

Facilitate

Facilitate a peer group

Alternative/expanded skill building

Entrepreneurship and/or leadership training;

Management training, i.e. distinguish between detail of conservation work and management which requires different skills

Fundraising

Powers of negotiation

Offer  
Workshops

Amend the code of ethics

Provide mental health and self-care resources

Support interns and each other

Develop outward facing advocacy

Become less intimidating

Additional  
Options