

# Animal Behavior and Low Stress Handling: How can our team prevent trauma to our patients?

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- What is "aggression"?
  - Training Problem
  - Behavioral Disorder
  - Medical Problem
    - Look at symptoms
    - Full physical examination and diagnostics
- Behavior Medicine
  - Separation anxiety
  - Fears
  - Phobias
  - Unruliness
  - Hyperactivity
  - Compulsive disorders
  - Cognitive dysfunction in dogs and cats
  - Inappropriate elimination
- Senses
  - Vision
    - Dogs 40-60, best vision is close up
    - Total field of vision is about 250°
    - Good vision in dim light
    - Dogs do see color, blue-violet and the yellow-green ranges
  - Hearing
    - dogs hear up to 65,000 Hz(vs. 20,000 Hz in humans)
    - cats hear up to 80,000 Hz
  - Olfactory
    - Dogs have 50 times more olfactory receptors
    - Dogs can detect some chemicals in sweat that are in up to 100 million times greater dilution
  - Taste
    - dogs sensitive to sweets and are very fond of cheese, cream, and butter
    - cat responds to salty, sour, and bitter tastes.
    - palatability is largely based on smell, temperature, and texture
  - Touch
    - receptors to sense touch, pressure, pain, body movement and position, temperature, vibration, and chemical stimulation.
    - Touch receptors are located at the base of every hair, and especially the vibrissae
    - Long, firm strokes from head to hindquarters calm, reduce heart rate, and relieve stress
- Dominant vs Submissive Behavior
  - Dominant
    - Weight shifted forward
    - Ears up/forward
    - Mouth closed
    - Stiff
    - Tail up
    - Places muzzle or forelimbs over other animal
    - "muzzle pin" and/or "stand across"
  - Submissive
    - Weight shifted back and/or crouched
    - Ears back or to the side
    - Lips pulled back ("smiling")
    - Avoiding eye contact, licking lips
    - Tail tuck
    - Arched back, head down
    - Rolls to the side and lifts hind leg
    - "submissive sit"
- Cat body language
  - Tail position
  - Posture
  - Distancing
  - Head
  - Eyes
  - Ears
  - Whiskers
  - Mouth
- Importance of allogrooming and allorubbing
- What makes fear worse?
  - Improper greeting
  - Forceful handling or placing of patient
  - Loud noises or loud talking
  - Lurking around suspiciously
  - Looming over or reaching directly for
  - Too many people crowding around
  - Too many people calling or yelling commands
  - HEAD TAPPERS!

- General Principles of Handling
  - Start in a comfortable, quiet environment
  - Keep animals from pacing, moving in hyperactive manner, squirming, or suddenly bolting
  - Support the animal well
  - Avoid causing resistance in the patient
  - Know how to place your hands and body to control movement
- Dog Handling
  - Most dogs do very well in the position they are already in. No need to move them into another position.
  - Don't force dogs into lateral recumbency unless you absolutely have to
    - Dogs don't like their feet off of the ground
  - Muzzle from the side/behind the patient
  - Blood draws-use back leg as needed
    - Small dogs do well with lateral jugular blood draws
  - Be careful when grabbing feet. Dogs have many sensory nerves in their feet, which is why they typically do not like their feet touched.
  - Be careful what direction limbs naturally go
- Utilizing towel restraint- "cow neck"
  - Utilize for wiggly dogs that are trying to bite
- Muzzle holds make a difference
  - Avoid "c-cup" holds
    - Mimics other dogs putting their mouths over muzzles
  - Utilize "u-cup" holds
- Cat Handling
  - Less is more
    - No need to scruff
    - Sometimes only a hand is what is needed (or towel)
    - Scratching the head is nice, TAPPING the head is not nice
  - Use helpful devices
    - Yoga mats
    - Towels
    - Troughs
  - Sedatives/chemical restraint when needed
    - Balance safety and effectiveness of restraint
    - Utilizing oral "kitty magic" when needed
      - NMDA
      - Opioid
      - A-2 agonist
  - Remember old school methods can work, but we can do so much better!
- How to get a cat out of a carrier
  - Do not dump cats out of a carrier
    - More stress and takes longer
  - Disassemble the carrier
  - Place hand behind the head, other hand behind the body, and guide out
- Environment set-up
  - Create non-slip surfaces
  - Pheromone spray or plug in
  - Use of treats or toys
  - Kennels set up in low traffic areas
  - Separate dogs and cats
  - Turn down lighting during heighten stress
  - Give patients breaks
  - Set up cat caves in kennels
  - Food and water should be on other side of litter box in kennel
  - Kennels should be set up and cleaned appropriately like these are our own pets
    - Utilizing accelerated hydrogen peroxide disinfectant is known to rid of unwanted pheromones

- Neurotransmitters
  - Acetylcholine
  - Dopamine
  - Norepinephrine
  - Serotonin
  - GABA
- Anxiolytic drugs
  - Benzodiazepines
    - Treatment of fears and phobias, separation anxiety, aggression, anxiety-induced stereotypes, urine marking in cats, and appetite stimulation.
  - Buspirone
    - Control of urine spraying/markings and the control of fearfulness and anxiety.
  - Sileo
    - Noise-aversion
- Antidepressants
  - Tricyclics
    - Amitriptyline
    - Clomipramine
      - separation anxiety, obsessive disorders (e.g., lick granuloma, tail chasing), fearful aggression, hyperactivity, hypervocalization, and urine marking.
  - Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors
    - Fluoxetine
    - Sertraline
    - Paroxetine
      - obsessive disorders, phobias, aggression, inappropriate urine marking, and separation anxiety.
- Trazadone
  - Serotonin antagonist and reuptake inhibitor used in behavioral disorders such as anxiety and noise aversion.
    - causes serotonin to remain in the brainstem longer allowing for less anxiety.
- Monoamine Oxidase-B Inhibitors
  - Selegiline (Anipryl)
    - treatment of old-dog dementia (cognitive dysfunction syndrome) and treatment of canine Cushing's disease (hyperadrenocorticism)
- Miscellaneous Behavioral Drugs
  - Gabapentin
    - Anxiety and phobia
  - Clorazepate
    - Anxiety or social phobia. Class IV controlled drug
  - Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
    - Used for hyperactivity in dogs. Class II controlled drug

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