

**Manette M. Kohler, DVM**  
Veterinary Behavior Consultant  
262-332-0331  
helpinghanddvm@gmail.com  
[www.helpinghanddvm.com](http://www.helpinghanddvm.com)



## STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN – ANIMAL CONNECTION

### Behavior Wellness

#### Promoting the pet's behavioral health throughout their lifetime

Just as we have programs in place to promote pets' health at all stages of life, there's an equal need, within veterinary practices, to create programs to promote pets' behavioral health throughout their lifetime. This is especially true since behavior issues rank among the top reasons pets are relinquished.

Up until now, the focus has mainly been on treating established unwanted behavior problems. To make matters worse, clients often don't ask for help until the situation is dire and they are at their wit's end. For those that seek assistance early, they're often seeking it in the wrong places such as the internet, punishment-based trainers, etc. It is easier to "prevent" unwanted behavior issues than it is to try to correct them once they are well-established.

The solution is to focus on "Behavior Wellness" in the veterinary clinic setting. Just as good health is more than the absence of disease, Behavior Wellness is more than the absence of behavior problems. ***"We define behavior wellness as the condition or state of normal and acceptable pet conduct that enhances the human-animal bond and the pet's quality of life."*** (Hetts, Heinke, Estep, JAVMA, vol 225, No. 4, Aug 15, 2004 - "Behavior wellness concepts for general veterinary practice). Veterinarians and their support staff are in a perfect position to introduce and promote the concept of behavior wellness since we are seeing them as early as 6 weeks of age, if not earlier.

It is important to educate them and give them sound behavior advice starting at an early age in the pet's life in order to counter some of the harmful, inaccurate and down-right dangerous advice they may be getting elsewhere.

Per the Behavior Wellness definition, we're talking about behavior that is normal for the species but that is also acceptable to the human caretaker. For example: It's normal for cats to seek out certain textures and locations which *they think* are appropriate for elimination. However, if this leads to urination in the middle of the dining room rug, this could ultimately cost the cat its life. So.... because this is unacceptable to most cat owners, this would not be healthy behavior, even if it's normal behavior for the cat. Acceptable behavior is vital to a pet's well-being because an unresolved behavior problem can be "Terminal" for the pet.

Behaviors that are not acceptable to the client can weaken, and even break, the human-animal bond. Once this bond is broken, we are in "Crisis" mode since the pet is at risk of being relinquished if we can't change the behavior. Note: It is much harder to change well-established patterns of behavior. Educating clients on the "behavioral needs of animals" and dispelling the "unrealistic expectations and interpretations" of their pet's behavior, can go a very long way to helping the client be empathetic, understanding and motivated to put the time in that's necessary to prevent and/or treat behavior problems.

Behavior problems are the most common reason given by owners for the relinquishment of their dogs to shelters and the 2nd most common reason given for the relinquishment of cats to shelters (Salmon, Hutchinson, Ruch-Gallie, et al. Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 2000). The following factors contribute to these relinquishments: 1) Lack of knowledge about pet behavior; 2) Inaccurate beliefs; 3) Unrealistic owner expectations. Therefore, a focus on "Education" for the pet owner is an important part of a good Behavior Wellness program.

Pet owners have clear responsibilities and roles to play in creating healthy behaviors in their pets by meeting their pets' behavioral needs and understanding what is normal. Example: The cat may have resorted to urinating on the dining room rug because her litter box was filthy. It is our responsibility to teach them that cats prefer to eliminate in very clean boxes located away from high traffic areas, yet convenient for the cat and with an escape route available. Many pet owners often don't know what their role is, and what specific steps to take to create the behaviors they want..... Hence the need for "Behavior Wellness Care"!

Behavior Wellness care is planned attention to a pet's conduct and the active integration of behavior wellness programs into the delivery of pet-related services, including routine veterinary medical care (Hetts, et al. JAVMA 2004). This means that, from day 1, we need to be teaching them about dog and cat behavior as well as what their role is, as the pet owner, to meet their pet's emotional, mental and physical needs.

The cornerstone of a behavior wellness program is the concrete description of a behaviorally healthy pet. It is important to define clear criteria for behavior wellness or the owners will, by default, simply go back to only addressing problems when they become serious. **What is a behaviorally healthy pet?** 1) Affectionate without being needy; 2) Friendly toward or at least tolerant of people, including children, and other members of their own species; 3) Enjoy or at least tolerate normal, everyday handling and interactions; 4) Eliminate only in acceptable areas; 5) Not overly fearful of normal, everyday events or new events; 6) Adapt to change with minimal problems; 7) Play well with others by not becoming uncontrollable or rough; 8) Not a nuisance or danger to the community; 9) Can be left alone for reasonable time periods without becoming anxious or panicked; 10) Readily relinquish control of space, food, toys, and other objects; 11) vocalize (bark or meow) when appropriate, but not to excess; 12) Dogs: reliably respond to "Sit, down, come, or stay"; 13) Cats: Scratch only items provided for that purpose. Animals don't come into our lives pre-programmed to do all of this so it is crucial that we are guiding them every step of the way to help them create a behaviorally healthy pet!

*These behaviorally healthy pet traits have various influences:* 1) Genetics (i.e. shy versus bold; propensity for anxiety, reactivity; impulse control); 2) Early life experiences/influences (i.e. socialized? negative experiences?); 3) Learned behaviors (i.e. Animals do what "works" = does jumping "work" to get attention?); 4) Environment (i.e. is there an adequate number of litter boxes? are the boxes kept clean enough?). There is A LOT of human influence here - so there's a high need for "Education"!

Educating clients starts with the veterinarian and support staff having a good knowledge base of the following important topics: 1) What are the pet's behavioral needs? 2) What constitutes a "Healthy Relationship" between the owner and the pet? 3) What are healthy attitudes and realistic expectations? 4) Importance of "Socialization".

**What are the behavioral needs of companion animals?** 1) Provision of a safe, comfortable place to rest and sleep (i.e. cat trees, pet gate separating dog from toddler); 2) Freedom from or the ability to escape from unnecessary pain, fear, threats, and discomfort; 3) Ability to control some aspects of the environment (i.e. allowed to go hide in a closet during storms); 4) Opportunities to express typical species behaviors such as chewing, scratching, and elimination; 5) Opportunities for appropriate exercise and play; 6) Opportunities for

mental stimulation (allowing the dog to sniff its way along on a walk provides lots of mental stimulation);  
7) Opportunities for pleasant social contact with conspecifics and humans to which the animals have been socialized.

The behavioral needs are influenced by the environment as well as the animal's age, breed, species, socialization history, as well as "Who" the animal is. For example: Feral cats often never enjoy petting and being picked up; A Border Collie is going to have different needs than a Chihuahua. Look at the individual animal to determine what their needs are going to be.

**There are four characteristics of a behaviorally healthy lifestyle for dogs:** (Hetts, Estep, 2014 - Behavior Education Network)

1. Environmental Predictability: a) They like to follow regular daily schedules. This is why big life changes such as an owner getting a job and thus being away more; or a new baby, are stressful for many pets. b) Any aversives should be predictable. Note: Aversives are NOT typically our first line of treatment but there are certain situations where they can be helpful. Example of predictable aversive = electronic containment system with a tone that signals a shock if the dog gets into a flower garden. Example of an unpredictable aversive = Inconsistently squirting the dog with a hose "on occasion" when owner sees the dog in the flower garden. Unpredictability = STRESS!

2. Ability to exercise control over their environment: Lack of control is a significant stressor for animals and humans. Consider the question, "How might the dog choose to spend their day?" Would they choose to lay around the house all day alone with nothing to do? or confined in a crate for 8 hours? It is good to give the dogs choices about where they spend their time. Example: provide a safe place for the dog to go where the toddler can't get to her; Provide a closet for the dog to go hide in, if they wish, during a storm. Finally, give the dog ways to ask for things they want. Example: a) "Nothing in Life is Free" program; b) Allow the dog to initiate play. They aren't trying to be "Dominant" and trying to control you - *they just want to play!*

3. The importance of novelty: Most pets have some degree of neophobia (fear of new things). Example: a cat may be wary of a new box in the house; a dog may be shy at first when going to a new kennel. Neophobia is more pronounced and common in cats but any animal can be genetically predisposed. Lack of socialization is a HUGE factor. Once the sensitive period for socialization shuts down, the default emotion is "fear" towards "new" things. Novel things are most distressing when presented "Suddenly, unpredictably, and if the animal has no control over the experience". Example: Taking the new kitten and forcing him into the face of the family dog so the cat "Learns that the dog won't hurt him". Note - this is unlikely to have the desired effect. Another common example is "Holding the dog in place so the toddler can pet him" = Note: this will make a fearful dog even more fearful because they can't escape. Pet owners need to know how tolerant their pet is of unfamiliar things, people, animals, objects, places, etc. Owners also need to be able to recognize the signs of stress or anxiety in reaction to environmental changes. It is important to know that "STRESS is CUMULATIVE", so we should avoid overwhelming the pet with too many unfamiliar experiences all at once. For animals that are slightly neophobic, gradual careful exposures are important. If the pet is highly neophobic, we need to employ behavior modification to change the way the pet feels.

4. Mental stimulation and physical exercise: Given the increase in obesity problems, most dogs and cats are under-exercised and, likely, bored. They will live happier, healthier and longer lives if given opportunities to use their brains and their bodies! Daily walks can be very mentally stimulating primarily due to "Sniffing". Other ways to stimulate their mind include: Feeding some or all of their calories through puzzle toys; Fun and positive obedience training, agility, scent work; Teaching tricks and shaping games. <https://www.dognition.com> is a

site where you can join and utilize interactive games and expert analyses that give you an unprecedented perspective on how your dog sees the world.

What happens when an animal's needs are not met? **STRESS!!** A stressor is anything that triggers a stress response. i.e. Not meeting their basic needs; Exposure to a novel environment (vet clinic). The stress response is a biological reaction to the stressor and is divided into physiological and behavioral stress responses. Physiological responses include hormone, chemical and immune responses to stress (i.e. cortisol); Behaviors associated with a stress response include: 1) Fear and anxiety behaviors (i.e. tail tucked, ears back, hiding, hypervigilance, calming/stress signals, etc); 2) Agonistic behaviors (Staring, snarling, growling, snapping, biting, etc); 3) Conflict behaviors (Displacement behaviors; calming or stress signals; avoidance behaviors); 4) Escape attempts; 5) Stereotypies (licking, tail chasing, light chasing, flank sucking, etc); 6) Self-injurious behaviors; 7) Changes in appetite or sleep patterns; 8) Behaviors associated with disease or illness (FIC = Feline Idiopathic Cystitis); 9) Lack of behavioral variability ("Shut down").

**Other things that can cause significant stress for the pet include:**

- 1) An unhealthy relationship between the owner and the pet
  - "Dominance-based" relationship
  - Focus on Positive Punishment (applying aversives to decrease unwanted behaviors)
  - Lack of good communication between owner and pet (humans not reading pets' signals/humans not giving clear and consistent signals to the pet)
  - Misunderstanding how pets "Learn"
- 2) Unrealistic expectations
  - Incorrect beliefs and misinterpretations of the pet's behavior

**Relationship:** Owners should strive for a mutually satisfying relationship with their pet. This can have a profound positive effect on the overall anxiety level of the pet. It is important to keep up with the literature and current thinking, about animal behavior, because we will need to dispel A LOT of bad training advice that owners find in popular media and through trainers using outdated and abusive methods.

**Should "Dominance" play a role?** NO!!! *"We need to help people create a relationship with their dog based on mutual respect and communication and trust, rather than the idea that you have to be dominant over your dog,"* (Suzanne Hette, Ph.D., CAAB - founder of Animal Behavior Associates and Behavior Education Network). Dogs are not constantly trying to be "Top dog" over us. They are not mis-behaving because they want to be "Alpha". They know we are not dogs. Do dogs have a hierarchy system with each other? Sure, but it is context specific and deference is not forced - it is freely offered. Nicholas Dodman, BVMS, DACVB, explains it well: *"We don't even call it dominance anymore. Instead of dominating the dog, owners need to LEAD the dog."* We should focus on showing animals what we would like them to do and then reinforce them for doing that.

**Punishment:** Our understanding of how dogs think, feel and learn is constantly evolving. Positive training is the future of dog training. It is the safest, quickest and most effective way to train animals. We now know that the "heavy-handed" and "punishment-based" approaches are harmful for many reasons:

- They damage the human-pet bond
- They increase the overall anxiety level of the pet (*studies show much higher cortisol levels in dogs that are trained with shock collars*).
- They make fear/anxiety-based behaviors much worse
- They increase aggression
- They impede learning

Example: Which child is going to be able to learn better and have a better relationship with their teacher:

1) the child that is chastised by the teacher every time she gets an answer wrong; or 2) the child that is praised and rewarded when they get an answer correct?

Examples of positive punishment include, alpha rolls, leash jerking, prong/shock collars, physical/verbal punishment, shaking a can of pennies, etc. People typically use "punishment-based" training and behavior modification because someone told them to. The average person doesn't know any better. So.... beware of the trainers you are recommending. Visit their website and read about their training philosophy; visit their facility and watch them teach some classes; ask them questions: "What exactly will happen to the dog if the dog gets it right? What will happen if the dog gets it wrong? Are there less invasive/aversive alternatives to what you propose? Also, beware of those individuals that offer "Guarantees" - there are NO guarantees!

The AVSAB (American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior) have position statements on the topics of "Punishment", "Dominance", and "Socialization" on their website <http://avsabonline.org>. It would be very helpful to make these available to all clients.

A good understanding of Learning Theory is needed to effectively change behavior and teach an animal new things, whether the animal is a dog, cat, chicken, elephant, and even a human. Animals do behaviors that WORK for them and that get them what they want. Animals repeat behaviors that are "Rewarded" or "Reinforced". To change a behavior, therefore, we need to remove the reinforcement for the unwanted behavior and reward a desired behavior instead. It is more effective to teach an animal what we want them to do and reward that, rather than try to stop a dog/cat from doing what we don't want them to do.

We can also change the way an animal feels. When we are changing emotions, we are talking about things like Classical Conditioning/Counterconditioning and Systematic desensitization. For example, if Fido is afraid of bikes, we can pair the presence of a bike with something really positive such as a high value food treat. If we do this repeatedly, Fido will learn that the presence of a bike predicts a yummy treat for Fido! This is called Counterconditioning since we are changing the fear emotion to calm anticipation. This is typically done, starting with a very low intensity of the trigger. So... the bike would be at a far enough distance that the dog can remain calm and learn. We would gradually get closer and closer to the bike over time. This process is desensitization.

Operant conditioning is also called "Learning by trial and error". There are four quadrants of operant conditioning: (+) Reinforcement; (-) Reinforcement; (+) Punishment; (-) Punishment. Sophia Yin's book, "How to behave so your dog behaves", is a good resource for learning about all aspects of learning theory and the info can be applied to all species. I recommend this book to practically all of my dog clients. Animals learn best with a combination of rewarding what we like (+R) and removing something they want in response to undesired behaviors (-P). Punishment-based trainers may use some +R for desired behaviors but they are also focusing heavily on using aversive techniques when the animal gets doesn't comply or makes the wrong choice. Note: punishment for fear/anxiety-based behaviors makes the fear/anxiety worse, because it makes, yet another negative association with the trigger and it damages the trust and bond between the animal and their owner.

Good communication is essential to a healthy relationship. Animals need clear and consistent signals from us. They also need us to have a good understanding of their body language since their body language and behavior is an outer expression of their internal emotional state. Good or bad communication between the owner and the pet has a HUGE effect on the overall relationship! Animals, especially dogs, are very good at reading our body language, including our facial expressions. i.e. It is common to see a dog lower their head, tail and ears in response to an "Angry" looking human face. It is helpful to encourage clients to be empathetic and patient and to try to see the world from the pet's point of view. With this in mind, they should practice being less

critical for things the pet cannot control. i.e. No stern face or words for being in your way or for slobbering water on the floor. Also, challenge clients to catch and reward the pet for desired behaviors 10 times per day... and then build on that.

The exam room is a great setting for pointing out what the animal's body language is saying. For example: Point out a fearful dog's tucked tail, lowered ears, head, body, yawning, lip licking, averting their gaze, etc. Rolling onto their back as we approach, in this context, is not an invitation to rub their belly. Rather, it is signaling the dog's desire for the interaction to STOP. It is also helpful to point out that a wagging tail does not mean the dog is happy. The character of the wag and position of the tail tells us the dog's intention. There are two very useful handouts/posters you could distribute to your clients: 1) Sophia Yin's "Body Language of Fear in Dogs"; 2) Turid Rugaas' "Stress ladder" (see resources).

Conversely, point out what "Happy" and "Relaxed" look like if their dog is displaying those signals (soft, squinty eyes, loose body and tail, level tail, etc). You can also teach clients how we can use our body language and behavior to make pets feel more comfortable. i.e. no direct approach; stand side-ways; avert our gaze, etc. There is a good body language video for dogs that could be shown to clients: "Zoom Room Guide to Dog Body Language" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00\\_9JPtXHI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00_9JPtXHI)

The same is true for cats - point out fearful versus relaxed/calm/happy body language and behavior. Don't mistake very still behavior on the exam table as a relaxed and content cat. They may be emotionally shut down due to fear.

We also need to promote helpful attitudes and realistic expectations. Owners often have incorrect beliefs and misperceptions of their pets' behavior. i.e. Assuming their pets are motivated by guilt, spite, revenge, or rebelliousness. These beliefs prevent them from developing realistic expectations. i.e. Owners return from an extended weekend away from home to find cat urine on a pile of laundry..... they assume the cat was "Angry" with them for leaving him alone. Help the client to understand that the inappropriate elimination was likely due to: 1) unattractive filthy litter box since no one was home to scoop it daily; 2) stress of being home alone for the weekend; 3) or a possible UTI.

Help owners understand the pet is not purposely trying to anger them with their misbehavior.... *They are simply behaving in ways that work for them?* Chewing the client's shoes when the owner is gone may serve to help them pass the time or work out their stress of being alone. When pet owners understand normal behaviors, their expectations are more realistic, resulting in much less pet relinquishment.

It is very common to hear clients say, "He knows he was bad because he gets that 'guilty' look on his face when I come home and there's poo on the floor". It is important to explain to them that the "guilty" look is simply appeasement behavior which is intended to "turn off" your angry face and body language.

So... how can we promote and provide behavior wellness to our clients? 1) Educate clients; 2) Assess behavior health at EVERY visit; 3) Make your veterinary hospital a behaviorally friendly place for animals and their owners.

Educate: If possible, help your clients choose a breed that's a good fit for their family. At puppy appointments, discuss socialization in detail and send the client home with plenty of helpful handouts to get them started on the right foot, including the AVSAB position paper on Socialization. Make the appointments positive by pairing the exam, vaccines, etc with high value food treats and low stress handling. Provide or promote "well-run" puppy classes starting as early as 7-8 weeks of age (they should receive their first vaccination at least 7 days before the first class and be dewormed, and they should maintain their vaccine schedule while taking the class.

At adult appointments, continue to teach owners about body language, learning theory and their pet's behavioral needs, etc. Provide a few key training and behavior books for sale or a recommended reading list for them, including "Puppy" books. (See booklist in references). There are many great handouts on various topics that can be copied for clients or included in your newsletters, etc. (See list of handouts in references)

Assess behavior at every visit: A short behavior questionnaire works well. See [www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com) for dog and cat behavior wellness quizzes. Inquiring about their pet's behavior at each visit is crucial because the earlier we intervene, the easier it is to treat a behavior issue. Identifying behavior issues opens the door for education and allows for more timely referrals, when needed. "Owners of pets with behavioral problems often don't seek intervention until the problem becomes critical, and the risk of pet relinquishment is high," (Debra Horwitz, DVM, DACVB, - JAVMA Nov 2000). They also may not seek help due to being unaware that treatment is available.

Veterinary behaviorist, Nicholas Dodman, did a survey behavior study (Veterinary Forum, June 2008) and found that only 1/3 of veterinarians felt behavior issues were as important as medical issues and only 10% of them thought they should be the ones to initiate a discussion with clients. This is very unfortunate because veterinarians and their staff are in the best position to keep good pups from becoming bad dogs, simply by integrating behavior wellness into appointments. Unacceptable behavior is a leading cause of death. Conversely, Well-behaved dogs are less likely to be relinquished and more likely to receive regular veterinary care.

The final role clinics play in Behavior wellness is to make the veterinary hospital a behaviorally friendly place for animals and their owners. The focus should be on creating a calm inviting hospital environment. We should approach and greet pets in a non-threatening manner and handle animals in a way that provides clear direction and guidance. This creates a more cooperative patient rather than creating confusion and fear and addressing patient care in this way makes for an overall positive experience for pets and owners and veterinary staff.

A recent survey of pet owners, that appeared in Veterinary Practice News, offered some troubling results:

- 1) 51% of owners said their pet dislikes going to the vet (up from 45% in 2010)
- 2) 38% said that just thinking about taking their pet to the vet is stressful (up from 30% in 2010)
- 3) 48% said the internet is the first option when the pet is sick or injured (up from 39% in 2010)

It is time to turn things around and there are many options to help clinics and staff become "Fear Free". Dr. Marty Becker, along with dvm360, Veterinary Economics, Veterinary Medicine, and firstline, have launched the "**dvm360 Leadership Challenge: Fear Free**". Marty formed a diverse 50-member advisory board to set in motion an educational movement leading to a new certification for veterinary hospitals and clinics. It appeared in the August 2014 issue of dvm360. The purpose of this Challenge is to improve the lives of companion animals and their owners and stem the tide of decreasing clinic visits and lost revenue.

There is growing support for methods that calm patients and create low-stress environments to encourage:

- Better healthcare
- More satisfied, compliant clients
- A happier staff
- Healthier bottom line

You can learn about this fear free challenge at:

<http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/dvm360-leadership-challenge-fear-free>

You will find the following articles at this site:

- "Your complete guide to reducing fear in veterinary patients" *dvm360*

- "Fear may not have to be the cost of getting the job done" *dvm360*

- "Why worry about fear free?" *Veterinary Medicine*

- "Fear free for the entire team" *firstline*

- "What dentists know about fear free" *Veterinary Economics*

Video: *"The Effects of Fear on Veterinary Patients"* - also on the *dvm360* site

Marty Becker and Karen Overall created a FREE 1 hour team training podcast on the Fear Free leadership challenge:

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7PHZ9fqjE>**

*"Fear is the worst thing a social species can experience. It can cause permanent damage to the brain. Once a pet has been frightened, it never forgets the experience."* Karen Overall, MA, VMD, Phd, DACVB, CAAB

Sophia Yin's book, *"Low Stress Handling, Restraint and Behavior Modification of Dogs and Cats"*, came out in 2009. She dedicated the book *"To all of the dogs and cats who could have had a better hospital experience."* She dedicated her life to this vision. It comes with a dvd that demonstrates the various low-stress handling and restraints. *"The techniques in the book will help reduce patient stress, improve staff safety, and enhance professional satisfaction by improving our bond with our patients."* Laurie Bergman, VMD, DACVB

There is also a "Low Stress Handling Certification for Hospitals and Individuals" now available. In collaboration with VetMedTeam, Sophia Yin created this course and certification. There are 10 courses, 2 CE credits each.

You can sign up at either of the following sites:

**LowStressHandling.com OR www.vetmedteam.com**

In this course, you will learn techniques that will save time due to the calming effect on animals, create a safer, more efficient workplace, and clients will be more confident in the level of care they are receiving.

In summary, Veterinarians and their support staff are in an ideal position to help make the lives of our patients and their owners BETTER!

Knowing that unwanted behavior is a leading cause of relinquishment, there is much that we can do to help prevent the 4-8 million animals/year from ending up in shelters, 2.5 million of which are euthanized.

Improving the overall atmosphere of the clinic can create a more "Stress-free" environment and change how our clients feel about bringing their pets to us for veterinary care.

I have created many helpful handouts you are welcome to print out and give to your staff and clients. Go to the resources tab on my website: **www.helpinghanddvm.com**

**"Like" Helping Hand Veterinary Behavior Counseling on facebook for lots of great info on behavior, including body language, bite prevention, the latest studies, etc.**





# Manette M. Kohler, DVM

Veterinary Behavior Consultant

262-332-0331

helpinghanddvm@gmail.com

www.helpinghanddvm.com



## Strengthening the Human-Animal Connection



### Behavior Wellness Reference list:

<http://avsabonline.org> = click "resources" tab and select "Position Statements"

[www.lowstresshandling.com](http://www.lowstresshandling.com) = There's a link here for Sophia Yin's online course on "Low Stress Handling" and certification for hospitals or individuals (20 CE credits); Her dvd's are also listed here with links to purchase.

[www.vetmedteam.com](http://www.vetmedteam.com) = The Sophia Yin course on "Low Stress Handling" is through VetMedTeam; all info about the course and certification is here.

[dvm360.com/fearfree](http://dvm360.com/fearfree) = dvm360 leadership challenge: Fear Free this contains all info on this national campaign on fear free veterinary care.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7PHZ9fqjJE> = 1 hour free team training podcast with Dr. Marty Becker and Dr. Karen Overall on the "Fear Free" Challenge and why it is so vitally important for clinics to get on-board with "fear free veterinary care".

Zoom Room Guide to Body Language Video link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00\\_9JPItXHI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00_9JPItXHI)

### Book list (for clients):

Patricia McConnell has a number of inexpensive booklets on a variety of behavior topics:

- The Fastidious Feline (how to prevent and treat litter box problems)
- The Cautious Canine (how to help dogs conquer their fears)
- How to be the leader of the pack and have your dog love you for it
- Way to go (how to housetrain a dog of any age)
- I'll be home soon (separation anxiety)
- Feisty Fido (help for the leash-aggressive dog)
- Feeling outnumbered (how to manage and enjoy your multi-dog household)
- Play together, stay together (happy and healthy play between people and dogs)
- Love has no age limit (welcoming an adopted dog into your home)
  
- Train your dog positively, by Victoria Stilwell
- How to behave so your dog behaves, by Sophia Yin
- On talking terms with dogs: calming signals, by Turid Rugaas
- Raising a behaviorally healthy puppy, by Suzanne Hetts and Dan Estep
- 12 terrible dog training mistakes owners make that ruin their dog's behavior...and how to avoid them, by Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D.
- How to raise a problem-free cat, by Peter Neville and Claire Bessant
- Decoding your dog, by The American College Of Veterinary Behaviorists

-The Well-adjusted Dog, by Dr. Nicholas Dodman

Resource for clinics: "Low stress handling, restraint and behavior modification of dogs and cats", by Sophia Yin

Free poster/handouts under the "blog" tab at: [drsophiayin.com](http://drsophiayin.com)

"The Dog Behavior Wellness Quiz" and "The Cat Behavior Wellness Quiz":  
[www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](http://www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com)

"Stress Escalation Ladder" handout: [http://www.dog-games.co.uk/forms/stress\\_chart.pdf](http://www.dog-games.co.uk/forms/stress_chart.pdf)

dvd's:

"Dogs have owners but cats have staff!", by Patricia McConnell

"Towel wrap techniques for handling cats with skill and ease", by Sophia Yin

"Handling, Moving and Restraining Dogs in stressful environments. Part 1: a workshop on essential exercises with special techniques for medium and large dogs", by Sophia Yin

"Creating a pet-friendly hospital, animal shelter, or petcare business", by Sophia Yin

I have the following handouts available and you are welcome to copy them and hand them out to your clients/ or put in puppy and kitten kits:

Housetraining 101

Body Language of Fear (sophia yin's chart)

Cognitive disorder syndrome

Dog's and babies resources

Fear and anxiety based behaviors

Thunderstorm phobia

Puppy tips

Life with Felines

Feline environmental enrichment

Feline body language

Feline inappropriate elimination

Feline lower urinary tract disease

Feline social system

Introducing a new cat to a home with cats

*If you are interested in any of these handouts please email me at the above email address.*