

Triaging Those Pesky Behavior Cases!

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1

Learning Objectives

- At the closure of this lecture attendees should:
 - Know the baseline medical data needed for behavior problems
 - Be able to collect baseline behavior data for common behavior problems
 - Understand how to use Ian Dunbar's Bite scoring system
 - Know common interventions to get patients to their appointment with the veterinary practice
 - Be able to create a referral information hand out for your practice

2

How do we hear about issues?

- Phone calls / Emails / Texts
 - "Houston, we have a problem..."
 - Bites or injuries
 - Self harm
 - Damage to the home
- During Appointments
 - "Yes, his urine and stool are normal - but when he gets angry he pees on our bed"
 - "By the way, she doesn't like fireworks...she got loose and ran away"
 - "How old will he be when he stops peeing in the house?"



3

Why do people call TBC?

- Review of new client call logs
 - Phone, email & walk ins
- Specialty hospital – Behavior only
- 2 months
- 209 calls
- Majority of calls – canine



4

Top Canine Reasons:

8. General fears/phobias: outside, flooring, cars
7. Fear of Noises (fireworks/storms)
6. Compulsive disorder symptoms (tail chasing, fly snapping, spinning, chasing lights & shadows)
5. Symptoms of Separation Distress
4. Generally Anxious/Fearful
3. Aggression to dogs
2. Aggression between housemate dogs
1. Aggression to People



5

Top Feline Reasons:

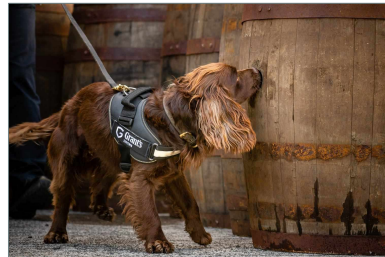
6. Fearful of Carrier
5. Aggression at Vet
4. Help with introducing new cats
3. Aggression to People / Owner
2. Out of the box (Urine or Stool)
1. Aggression to housemate cats



6

Distilling It Down

- Our focus topics for today:
 - Separation Related Disorders
 - Aggression between pets
 - Aggression to humans
 - Urination and defecation
 - Generally anxious behavior



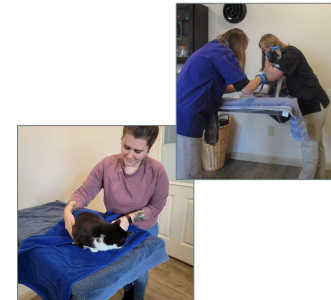
Fun Fact: This is QC in a Scotch Distillery in Scotland



7

How can you help?

- Start with what you do best:
 - Physical Exam
 - Complete Blood Count
 - Chemistry Profile
 - Thyroid Screening
 - Urinalysis
 - Fecal Scoring – What does normal mean?
- Rule out medical disease



8

How can you help?

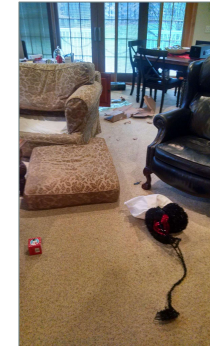
- Information Collection
 - Schedule a triage call or appointment
 - Can be revenue generating!
- When does it happen?
- Where?
- How frequently?
- Is there anything changing/new?
- Collect information
 - No judgement
 - No blame



9

Information Collection: I'm SO Alone....

- Separation related disorders
 - Can't be alone
 - Can't be away from my special person
- Confinement Anxiety
 - I can't be away/separate/confined
- Specific questions
 - When does damage/U/D/vocalization happen?
 - Who was present / not present?
 - Where was the pet?
 - Are there triggering events?



10

Information Collection: I'm still SO Alone...

- Can present as house training problem
- Can be difficult to determine who in multi pet households
- VIDEO when alone
 - Pacing? Panting? Drooling?
 - When does U/D/Vocalization occur?
 - Duration of behaviors?
 - Where is destruction & when does it happen?
- Usually within 1st 30 min of departure
- Multiple departures make it worse
- Departure defined: eye of the beholder!

Where is the beagle?



11

Triage Plan: So Alone....

- Assess severity
 - Is there self injury or risk for self harm?
 - Yes – needs medical intervention
 - No – ask more questions
 - How often does the O need to leave?
 - Daily? 3 days a week?
 - How long does the pet have to be alone?
 - 10 hrs vs 2 hrs
 - How frequently does the problem occur?
 - Every time – medical intervention
 - Only once a week – assess severity again
 - Can they eat when alone (pizza party)?
 - Yes – can use food enrichment
 - No – needs medical intervention



12

Triage Plan: I'm so, SO Alone...

- Can the pet stay somewhere else?
 - Grandma's house
 - Daycare
 - Day boarding
- Schedule for appt. for medical intervention
 - Medication – daily and/or PRN for departures
 - Help Now: Short acting meds for panic



13

Information Collection: Bites – A Must Know for Aggression

- Be respectful & empathetic
- Is everyone okay? Are they safe?
 - Dogs separated by doors or in crates
 - Does anyone need medical care?
- What did the bite look like?
 - BL 1 – growl
 - BL 2 – red marks
 - BL 3 – scratches & bruising, breaks skin
 - BL 4 – deeper punctures, bruising
 - BL 5 – multiple, concerted, repeated attack
 - BL 6 – death of victim



14

Information Collection: Bites – A Must Know for Aggression

- Bite scoring is helpful for safety outcomes
 - BL 3 twice a year vs BL 3 daily
 - Does it happen to specific individuals?
 - When does it happen?
 - What happens right before?
 - Walk it back
 - Important for Prevention & Management
 - What happens after?
 - Important for Management & Safety



15

Information Collection: Aggression Between Pets

- Who is getting aggressed by whom?
 - Can be difficult
 - Original aggressor can become victim
- What was happening before?
- What happened after?
- ID Triggers
- Awareness of body language
 - Lack of awareness by humans: comes out of no where
- No, you do NOT need to see it!
- We do like to see injuries & info collect on bites



Cats who are Friends



16

Triage Plan: Aggression Between Pets

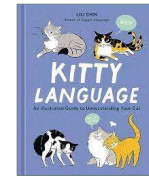
- Separation
 - Gates, Crates & Doors
- Avoid practicing the behavior/triggers
- Muzzle training for dogs
- Harness training for cats
- Working with a trainer
 - DS/CCC
 - Cued behaviors
- Reintroduction plans for housemates
- Medications – daily
- Rehoming/Euthanasia



17

Information Collection: Aggression to Humans

- Who is being aggressed?
- When?
- What happens before/after?
- ID Triggers
- Awareness of body language
 - Lack of awareness by humans: comes out of no where
- No, you still do NOT need to see it!
- We do like to see injuries & info collect on bites



18

Triage Plan: Aggression to Humans

- Avoid practicing the behavior
- Avoid triggers
- Separation from target
- Gates, crates & doors
- Muzzle training
- Work with a trainer
 - Cued behavior
 - DS/CCC
- Rehoming/Euthanasia?



19

Information Collection: Boxes

- Litterboxes are a common topic
 - Size
 - Goal: 2.5 x the length of the cat
 - Location
 - Ease of use
- Substrate – another possible problem
 - Clumping litter –scented or not
 - Texture close to sand
- Cleanliness
 - Scoop daily
 - Wash weekly



20

Information Collection: U&D...

- VIDEO: Right Pet?
- Location, location, location
- Frequency, duration
- Fecal scoring
- Review house training
 - How long are they alone?
 - Access to potty area
 - Way to communicate needs
- Dementia scoring
- Medical: UA, Fecal, GI Panel



21

Triage Plan: U&D

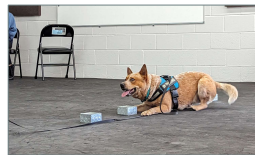
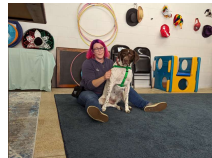
- RO Medical!
- Cleaning process
 - Testing for what that is
- Reinforce proper location
- Monitor for aggression between pets



22

Information Collection: Anxious & Fearful Behavior

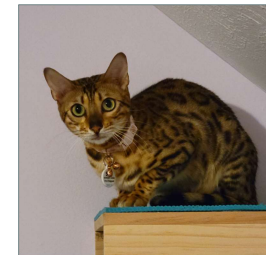
- How often does it happen?
 - Everyday vs once a month
- Are there specific triggers?
 - Storms, gunshots, fireworks, bacon, pots & pans...
 - Strangers in the home, children, suitcases...
- Does it influence:
 - Connection with the owner?
 - Ability to receive care?
 - Owner's ability to do certain things



23

Triage Plan: Generally Anxious Behavior

- Avoid triggers
 - Set up safe spaces
 - Zen room
- As needed medications
 - Target the trigger
- DS/CCC to triggers
- Daily medications
 - Need less medication for triggers
 - More even behavior



24

Creating Referral Sheets

- Trainers
 - Not a regulated industry – do you research!
 - Positive Reinforcement Based
 - Treats, clickers, harnesses, halters
 - Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner
 - Certified Professional Dog Trainer
 - IAABC
 - Observe a class or session
 - How do they treat the animal?
 - How do they interact with the client?
- Behaviorists
 - Associate / Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist
 - Masters / PhD in biology, behavior, ethology...
 - Rare that they are also DVM's



25

Creating Referral Sheets

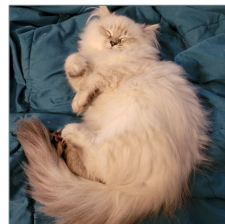
- American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior
 - <https://avsab.org/>
 - Veterinarians with a special interest in behavior
 - Open to technicians, A/CAAB's & allied professionals
- American College of Veterinary Behaviorists
 - <https://www.dacvb.org/>
 - Veterinarians who are in/have completed residencies
 - Sit a board exam
- Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians
 - <https://avbt.net/>
 - Application process (experience + education)
 - Sit a board exam



26

Questions?

Thank your local Heska Reps!



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27