RESPECTFUL CAT HANDLING vs. CAT WRANGLING

Margie Scherk
DVM, Dip ABVP (feline practice)
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Outline

• Improving a cat’s clinic experience
  – Minimizing threats
  – Reading signals
  – Respectful & friendly handling
  – *Think like a cat*

• Compliance
  – Education - *Subtle signs of sickness*
  – Getting to the clinic (or *anywhere*) with less fuss
  – Better home care after visit
Going anywhere
What is the kitty’s experience?
Segregate cats

- Cat-friendly waiting area
- Cat-only exam room
- Cat-only ward

Capital Illini Veterinary Services, Springfield, IL
www.cathealthy.ca

Reserved for cats only

Réservé exclusivement aux chats
Handling the self-defensive cat

• How can we minimize threats?
• Threats are multi-sensory
  – Sounds
  – Sights
  – Smells
  – Tactile
  – Taste
• www.feliway.com
Handling the self-defensive cat

- How can we minimize threats?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>Reduce threat by?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smells</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When cats feel threatened

Gourkow N. CatSense: The Emotional Life of Cats
Levels of fear
Levels of fear

FEAR is the #1 cause of bad/undesirable behavior in the veterinary practice!

What is the other cause?
Invite own exploration
Don’t grab, pull, shake or dump
The best place to examine or work with a cat is where the cat wants to be!

Dr. Mark Peterson
Animal Endocrine Clinic, NY
Examine the reluctant cat in the bottom of the carrier

Allow the cat to decide where the exam will take place
Bribery works!

Bob and Sandy
Courtesy Dr. Susan Little

Courtesy Dr. Liz O’Brien
“Finesse rather than force”

Sophia Yin

- Forceful restraint *does not work*
- Punishment doesn’t work
- Minimal restraint
  - Towels
- Face cat away from you
- “Four to the floor”
Using cat signals

- Vocalizing (cats and people)
- Slow eye blink
- Hood your eyes and look sideways
- Do NOT “shush” the cat
- Don’t scruff (very rude)
- Don’t stretch

Let the cat feel he has some control over his situation
Clients don’t like how we treat their beloved cat
Enhance the examination

Narrate the exam in detail
• What you are doing
• What you are looking for
• What you find

Value is Perceived Worth
Sedation?

- Short term memory
- Ability to learn
- Gabapentin:
  - 100 mg PO 90 min before visit
Try to avoid taking cats “to the back”

- Cats get acclimated to the exam room
- Better for the owner to leave than the cat
Sample collection

- Lateral recumbency +/- front end up
- Medial saphenous vein
  - Blood collection
  - Catheter placement
  - IV med administration
- Lateral saphenous vein
- Lateral cystocentesis
- Blood pressure evaluation
Choice and control
Sample collection

- Jugular venipuncture
  - Lateral recumbency
  - Sternal with front feet on table
  - Young kittens: on their back
What sensory input is frightening?

- Sight
- Sound
- Smell
- Touch
- Taste
What sensory input is frightening?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>Reduce threat by?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smells</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sensory contribution to fear?

Visual?
Auditory?
Tactile?
Olfactory?
Gustatory?

What happens when someone reaches in?
Danger!
chaseviewvets.co.uk

rexpointe.com
Depression

Frustration

Fear

Anxiety

http://www.spcabc.ca/welfare/professional-resources/catsense/
Mental stimulation: puzzles & ipads
Mental stimulation: puzzles
Housing and treatment

- Separation from dogs is important
- Defensive and noisy cats should be kept separate so other cats don’t hear them
- Don’t let cats see other cats
- Maintain odour profile – 2 towels
- Don’t change diets in hospital

Reserved for cats only
Other useful techniques in cats

- Agitated cystocentesis
- Endotracheal tube (pelican)
- Tracheal wash
- Ear prick PCV and BG
- Intraosseus catheterization
- Marrow aspiration
- E-tube placement
- Urethral catheterization
Improving sediment yield
Intubation without a laryngoscope
Welcome to the Cat Friendly Practice Program

The Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) program contains the tools for practices to integrate a feline perspective and embrace the standards needed to elevate care for cats.

The Cat Friendly Practice program seeks to transform and elevate the delivery of feline veterinary care by:

- Laying the groundwork for the delivery of care to the underserved feline population.
- Identifying trends and baseline species information essential for understanding cats.
- Acknowledging the essential role of the cat owner in the veterinary visit.
- Providing support to veterinarians and their teams to create a cat friendly practice environment.
- Outlining strategies for introducing changes in the delivery of care that incorporate a better understanding of the cat's distinct needs and behaviors.

Apply Now!
Slow down to speed up: **TPR**

- **T**ake your time
- **P**ersonalize your approach to each individual cat
- **R**ead the signs

**LESS IS MORE**
Imagine...

Think like a cat

Remain compassionate

Avoid becoming fearful or angry

Thank you for your attention

hypurr@aol.com