



Stop, look and listen!
humane handling for more cooperative patients

Kat Pankratz, DVM, DACVB
Animal Behavior Clinic, Portland, OR
503.236.7833 | Animalbehaviorclinic.net

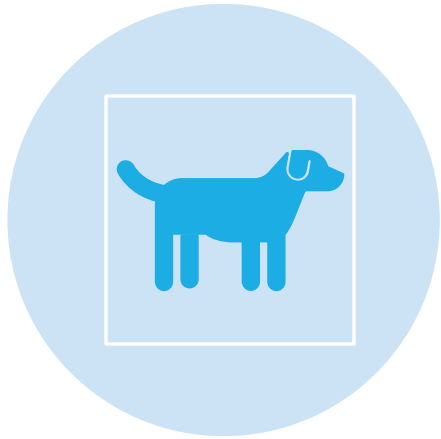
Session sponsor: VetStrategy



Financial Disclosure

I have no commercial relationship to disclose.

Learning Objectives



Identify sources of patient fear in a routine veterinary appointment



Recognize handling techniques that effect fear in our patients



Apply behavior modification to procedures to attenuate fear

**THAT MOMENT YOU REALISE
YOU'RE**

**GOING TO THE
VET**

Veterinarians and
the hospital
influence patient
emotion & behavior

Earlier experiences are associated with fear-related behavior

Study by Doring (2009)

135 healthy dogs visiting a veterinary practice

- 50% wouldn't walk in willingly
- 61% avoidance behavior
- 77% crouched posture
- 75% tucked tail
- 84% pulled to leave the practice

“...dogs with only **positive** prior experiences were significantly **less fearful** than dogs with at least one prior negative experience”





70% of dogs resist entry, attempt escape, or hide

Where are all of our feline patients?

From 2001-2011, only 50% of owned cats received
annual veterinary care

--AVMA US pet ownership & demographics





Fewer cats are visiting the veterinarian due to resistance transportation and veterinary exam

Executive summary of the Bayer veterinary care usage study

John O. Volk, BS; Karen E. Felsted, MS, DVM; James G. Thomas, PhD; Colin W. Siren, BA

Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association

May 15, 2011, Vol. 238, No. 10, Pages 1275-1282

<https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.238.10.1275>



Veterinary clinic
is a classroom

But what are they
learning...

Consequences of associative learning

Appearance of Veterinarian
(*neutral stimulus*)



Restraint/Pain
(*unconditioned stimulus*)



Fear/Anxiety
(*unconditioned response*)



Consequences of associative learning

After several Visits

Appearance of Veterinarian
(conditioned stimulus)



Fear/Anxiety
(conditioned response)



Negative experiences beget more stressful & difficult visits in the future

- Dominating/Overpowering
- Scruffing
- Pinning down
- Wrestling



Fig.11.7-H



Your interaction
impacts your
patient's present
and future
emotional health

Recognizing fear and anxiety early can prevent escalation to aggression



Increasing Fear



Humane handling is a manner of interaction that is non-confrontational and non-forceful to reduce patient fear



Avoid forceful handling

Images from Dr. Sophia Yin



Provide opportunities for choice & control



Benefits of
the low stress
approach



Positive experiences
for patient decreases
stress for better
welfare and more
accurate evaluation

Stress in the vet clinic can affect physiological test results

Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery
Volume 13, Issue 10, October 2011, Pages 733-737
© 2011 International Society of Feline Medicine and American Association of Feline Practitioners, Article Reuse Guidelines
<https://doi-org.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/10.1016/j.jfms.2011.07.003>

 **SAGE**
journals

Original Article

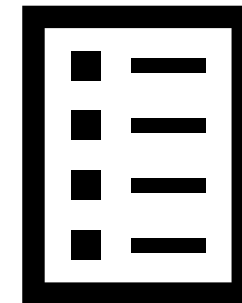
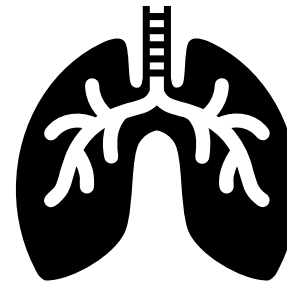
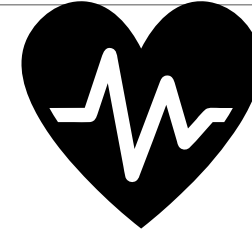
Evaluation of the Effects of Hospital Visit Stress on Physiologic Parameters in the Cat

Jessica M Quimby, DVM, DACVIM^{1,*}, Melissa L Smith, DVM¹, and
Katharine F Lunn, BVMS, MS, PhD, MRCVS, DACVIM¹

J Vet Intern Med 2002;16:123-132

Acute Stress Hyperglycemia in Cats Is Associated with Struggling and Increased Concentrations of Lactate and Norepinephrine

Jacqueline S. Rand, Emily Kinnaird, Anthony Baglioni, Judith Blackshaw, and Jan Priest



Humane handling respects client's "family"

APPMA National Pet Owners Survey 2007-2008

68% of clients expect their vets to treat their pets as a family member

Papp, et al 2012

- Less stress & anxiety
- Increased satisfaction & return
- Improved client-doctor relationship
- Reduced euthanasia or surrenders

Rodan, 2012



Humane handling
increases clinic efficiency,
less workers
compensation &
improved staff morale

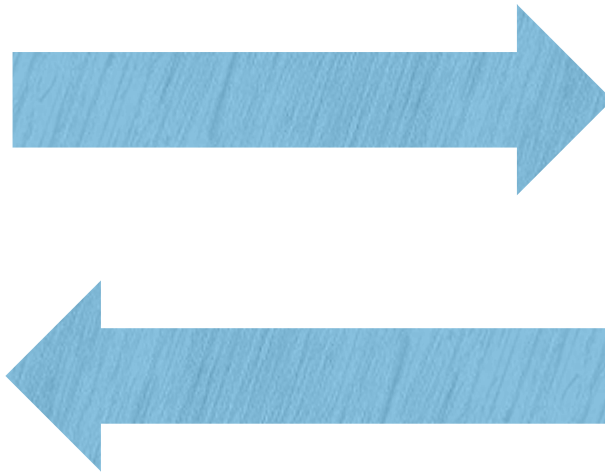
Rodan I. 2010

**Understanding feline behavior and application for
appropriate handling and management.**

Top Companion Anim Med



Humane handling grows clinic's business with more client visits and referrals





Recognize fear,
anxiety, &
stress



We want to avoid:

Fear

Unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone/thing is a threat

Anxiety

Emotional anticipation of an adverse event based on previous experience

Stress

State of mental or emotional strain

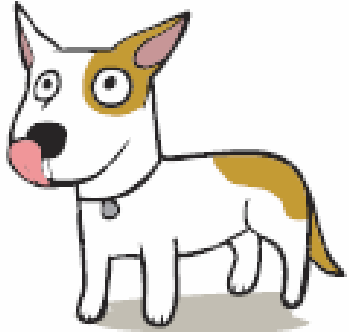
Fear is an involuntary emotional response,
which drives behavior
= Change the emotion, change the behavior



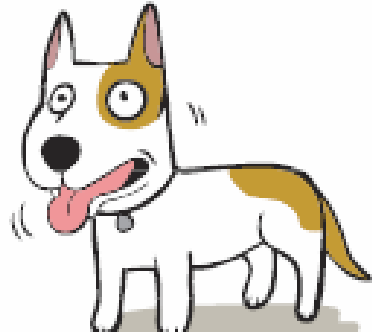


Fear responses are usually obvious

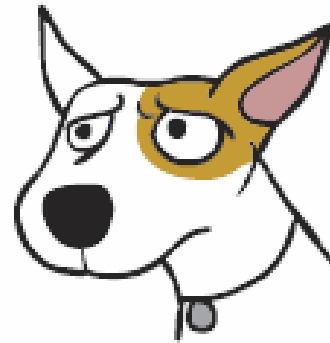
Some fear responses are more subtle



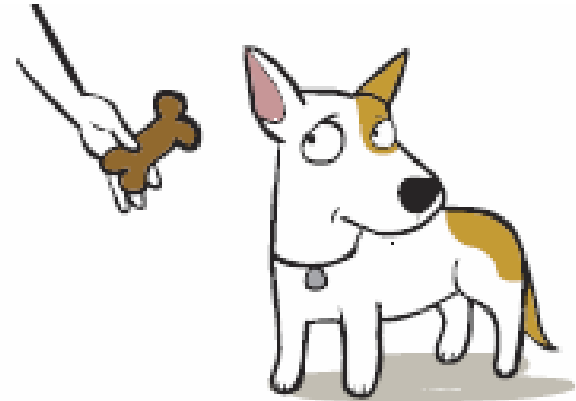
Licking Lips
when no food nearby



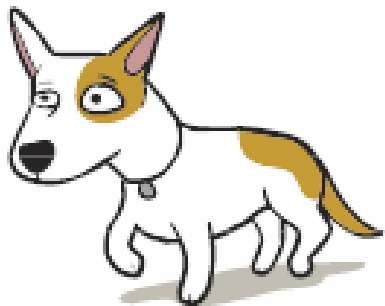
Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brow Furrowed, Ears to Side



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



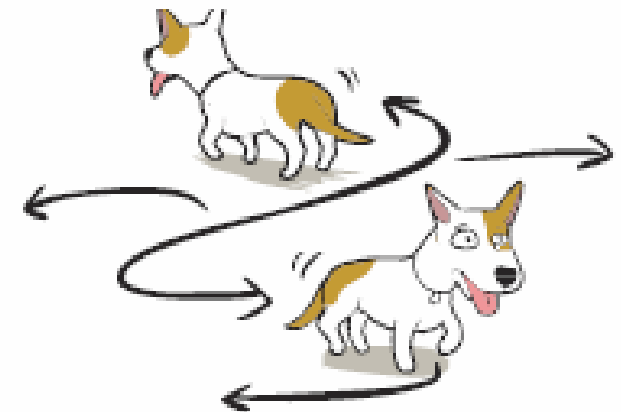
Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Pacing

Basic signs of fear

Flight

Freeze

Fidget (Sniff, groom)

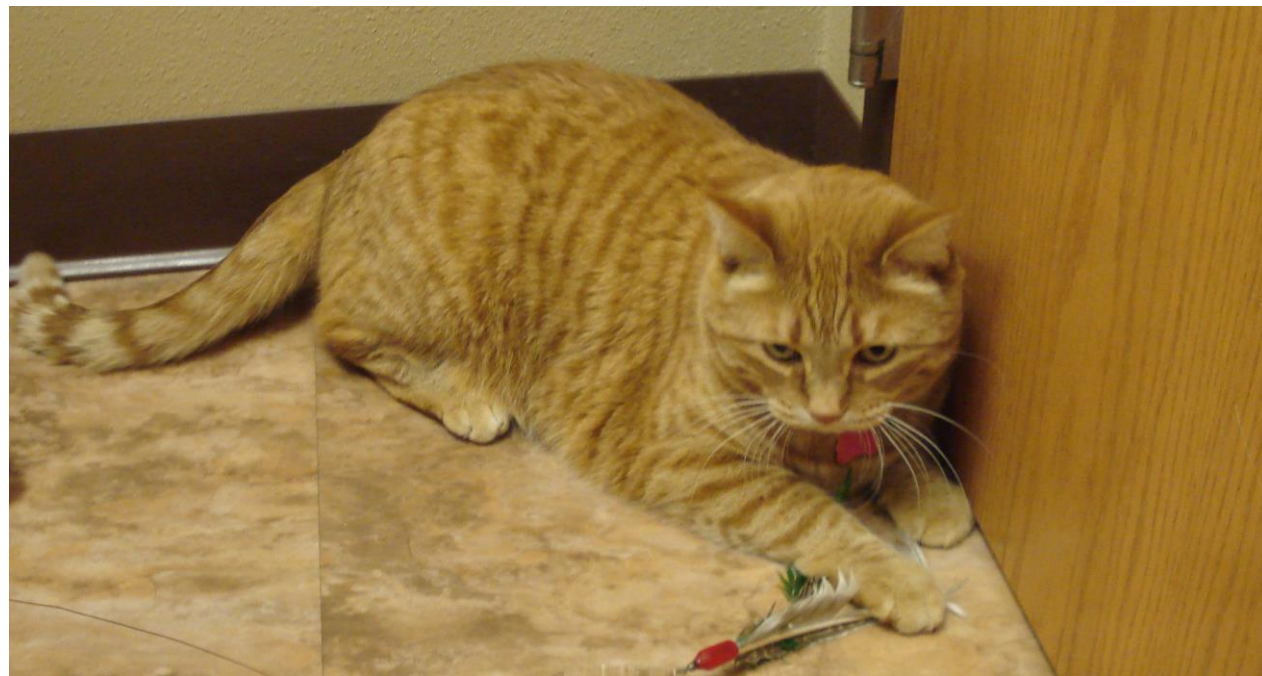
Fight



Signs of fear can be multiple & shift

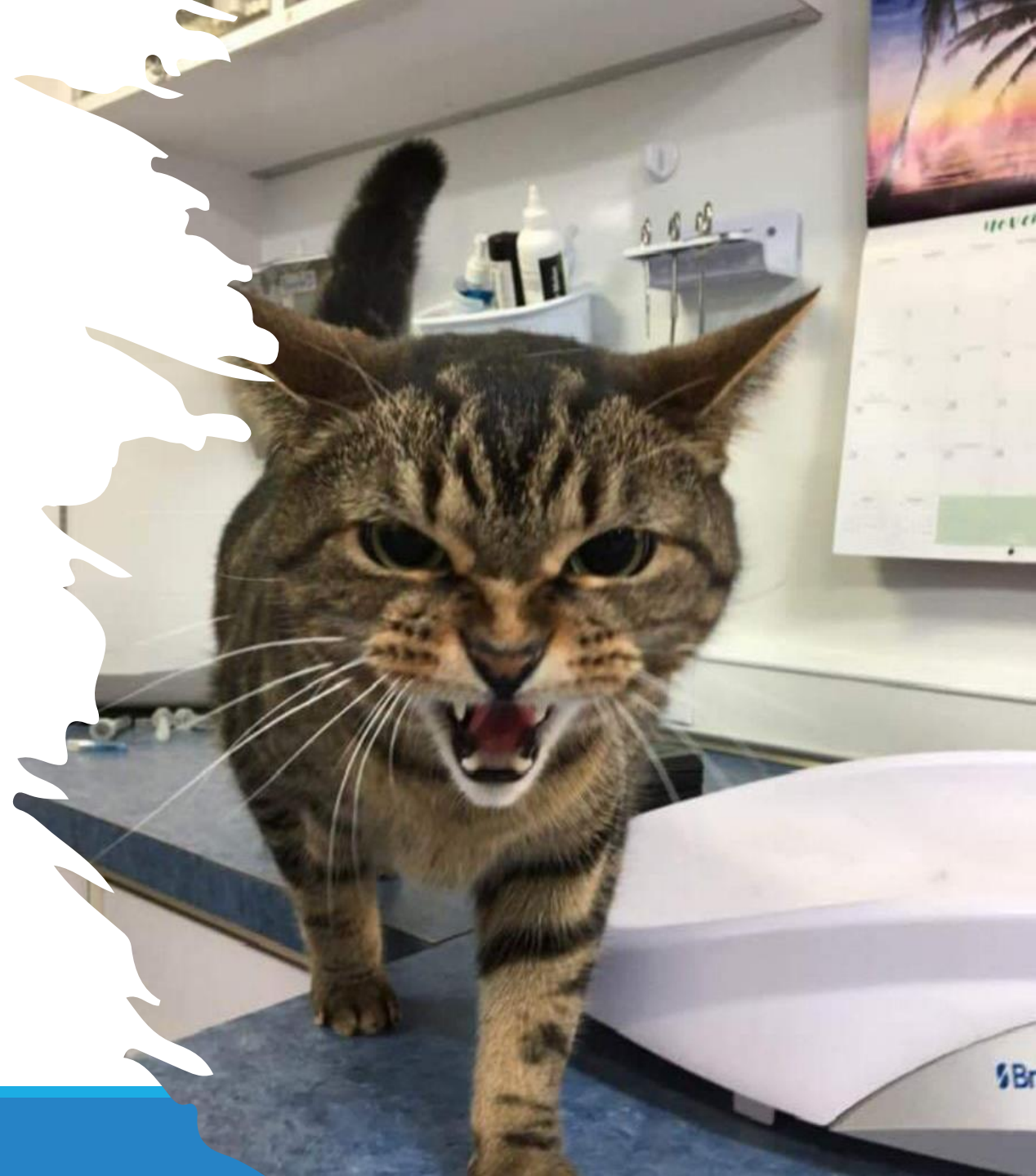


Increasing levels of arousal in cats



Rodan I. Understanding feline behavior and application for appropriate handling and management

Fighting is a pet's
last resort
but can become a
learned response



Walk through
a humane handling appointment

Understand the pet's perspective





Consider the
additive effect of
stressors

Train your team to provide a low stress experience from start to end



Before the appointment

Preventative: Owner education in Puppy preschool / Kitten kindergarten





Scheduling:
guide owners
before the day



Applying humane handling begins before the patient enters the clinic: Travel



Guidance
on desired
carrier
choice

Preparation for travel is as simple as feeding in the carrier



Prepare the patient for travel

AAFP Brochure

<http://www.catalystcouncil.org/>

Getting Your Cat to the Veterinarian

Reducing the Stress of Veterinary Visits for You and Your Cat



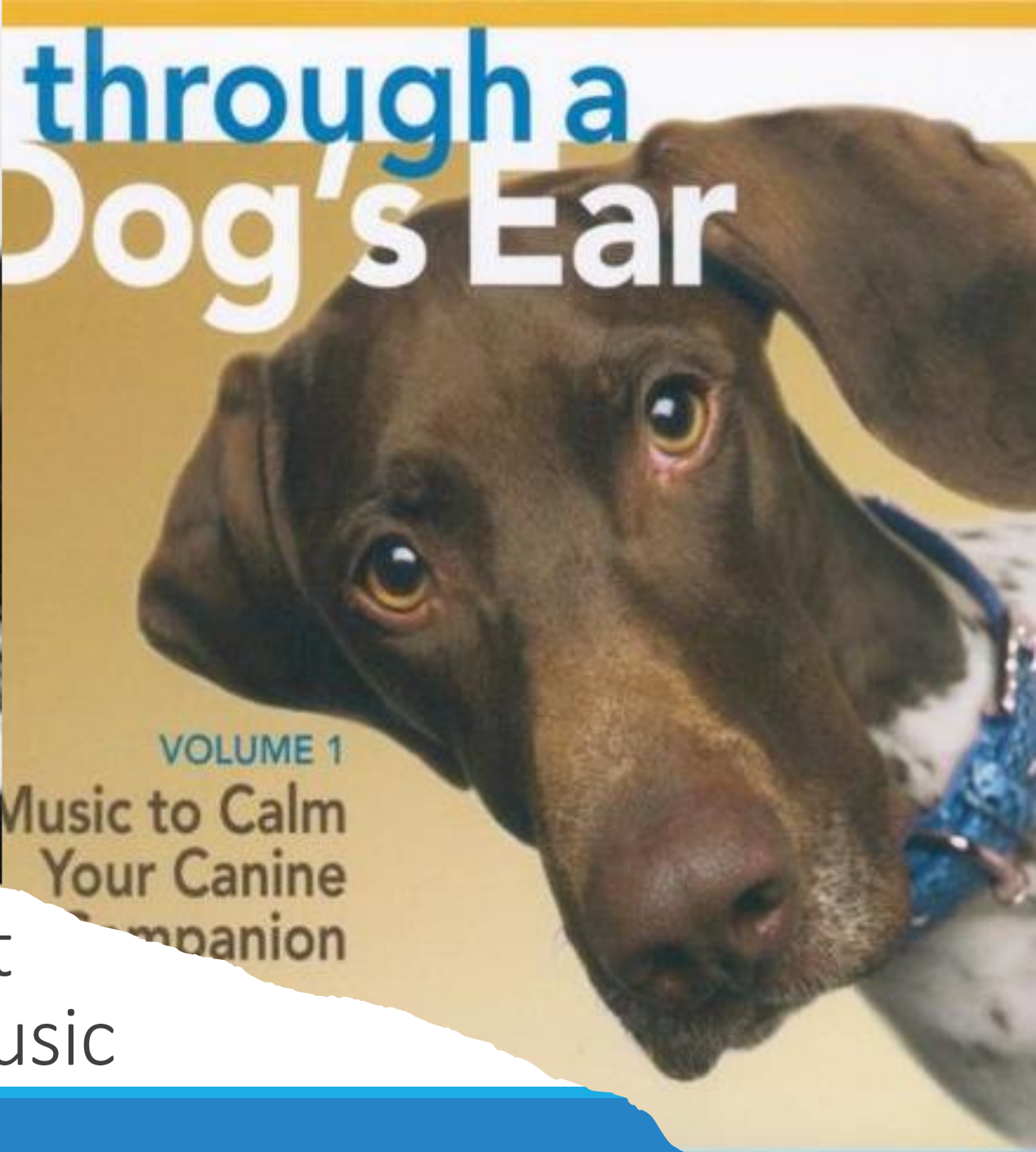
How to apply humane handling to appointments



Setting up the
environment
Consider the senses...

Increase sense of safety with height and visual barrier (especially for cats)





Instill sense of calm with soft lighting, quiet voices, and music



Be cognizant of pet's sense of smell



Be cognizant of pet's sense of smell

Kronen et al; Vet Anaesth & Analg 2006
Soares Pereira et al; JFMS 2015

Waiting room

The waiting room is the first experience at the appointment



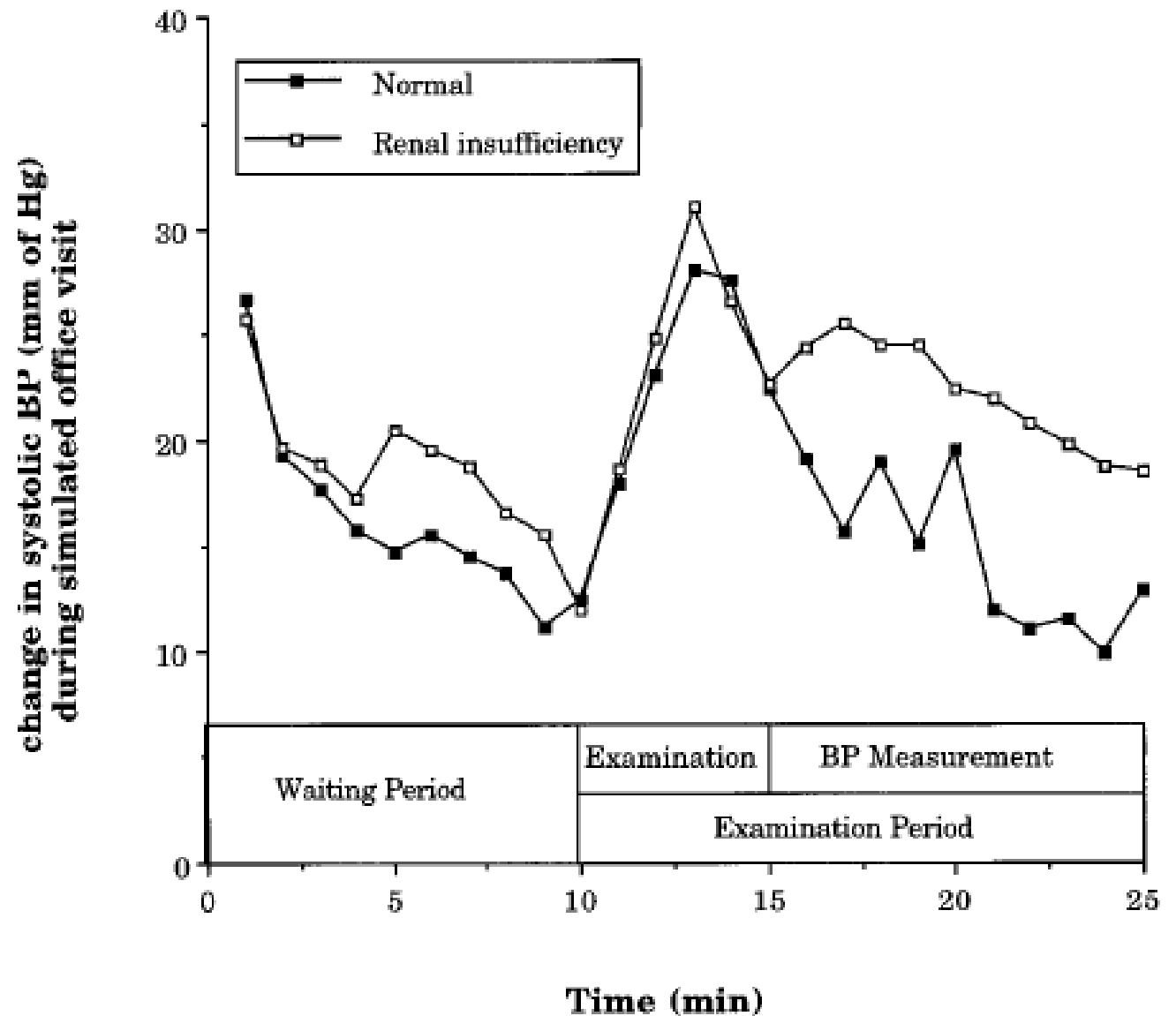
The waiting room can be an unpredictable environment and poses risk to your patients





Arrange to separate unfamiliar animals

Get cats out of the lobby ASAP to help BP, HR, & renal insufficiency



Evaluation of the White-Coat Effect in Cats

Amy M. Belew, Tiffani Barlett, and Scott A. Brown

Practice positive techniques throughout the visit



Exam room

During the visit

1. Have a plan
2. Use tools to assist
3. Use "less is more" handling
4. Don't be afraid to regroup
5. Keep behavior notes about patients





Prepare your tools before evaluation

Use tools to assist





Use humane
handling
tools wisely

Using tools to do whatever *you* want are NOT humane





Getting the
cat out of
the carrier

What NOT to do to get a cat out of a carrier



Allow patient to stay where they're comfortable and provide opportunities for choice



Allow the cat to exit the carrier on own



Kindly remove the carrier from the cat



Have a low key presence and allow the patient to acclimate to your presence



Consider how our behavior influences theirs



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick
your hand in his face



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick
your hand on top of his head



DON'T
Grab or Hug

Examinations & procedures (finally!)



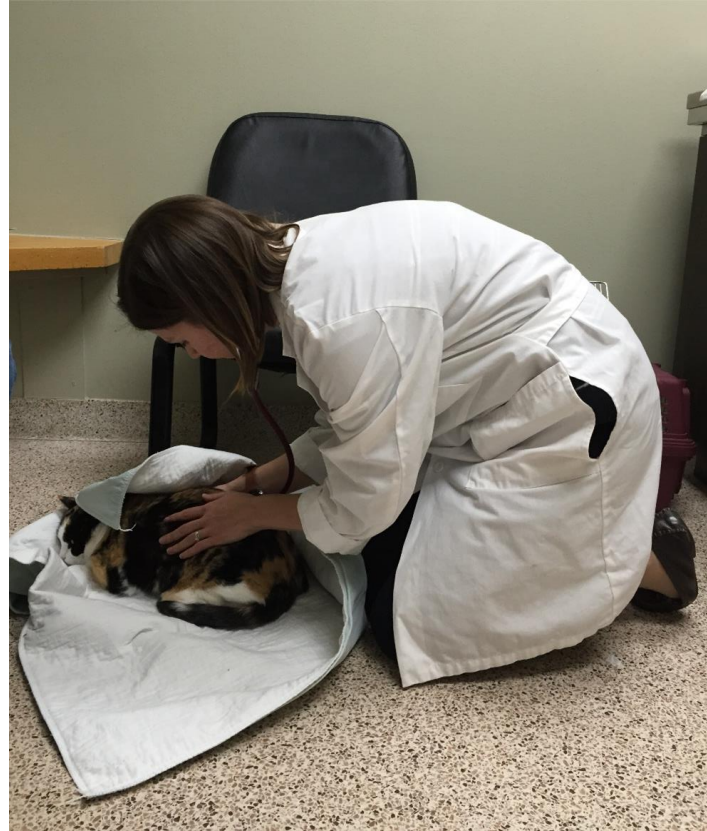
80% of dogs exhibit fear on the exam table



Use a non-slip substrate (mat)



Conduct exam where the patient is most comfortable



Conduct
exam where
the patient
is most
comfortable



Use non-
threatening
body language

Image: Dr. Sophia Yin

Avoid using face-on approaches



Image: Dr. Sophia Yin

Image: Dr. Sophia Yin



Avoid face-on approaches for procedures too

Image: Dr. Sophia Yin



Go slow to
go fast with
deliberate,
consistent
handling



Adapt your approach to the individual and adjust as needed to minimize anxiety

Skip the scruff

“(We) strongly support the view that scruffing should never be used as a routine method of restraint.”

--AAFP & ISFM

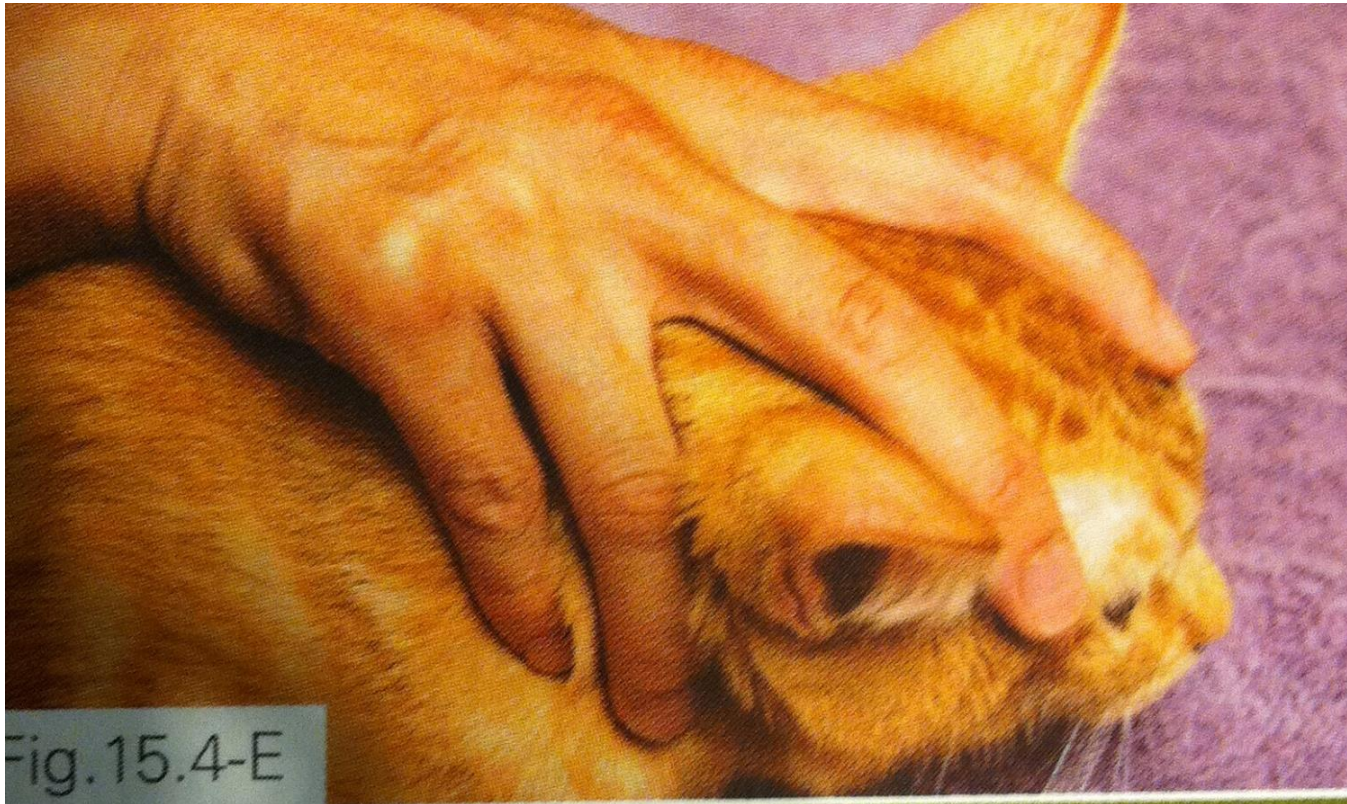




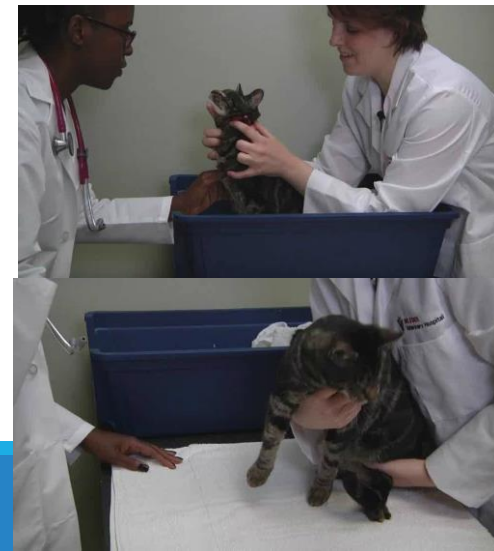
Scruffing
increases
struggle
(8x!), RR, &
escape

Moody C, et al., Applied
Animal Behaviour Science

Use minimal restraint needed
without eliciting anxiety or panic



Less is more, even for procedures





Humane safety tools: towels

Towel can provide sufficient restraint and protection



Humane safety tools: basket muzzles



Choosing a Muzzle



How to safely muzzle a dog



Better yet, teach them to put on their own muzzle





Use associative learning (conditioning) for positive emotional responses

Classical condition by **pairing reward throughout** the interaction



Operant
condition by
rewarding
the behavior
you want





Desensitization & countercondition by gradual intensity with positive pairing

Cooperative care &
desensitization/
counter conditioning
empower the patient





Provide a variety to meet pet preferences

Top tips for food rewards in the clinic

Have them come hungry

If pet won't eat

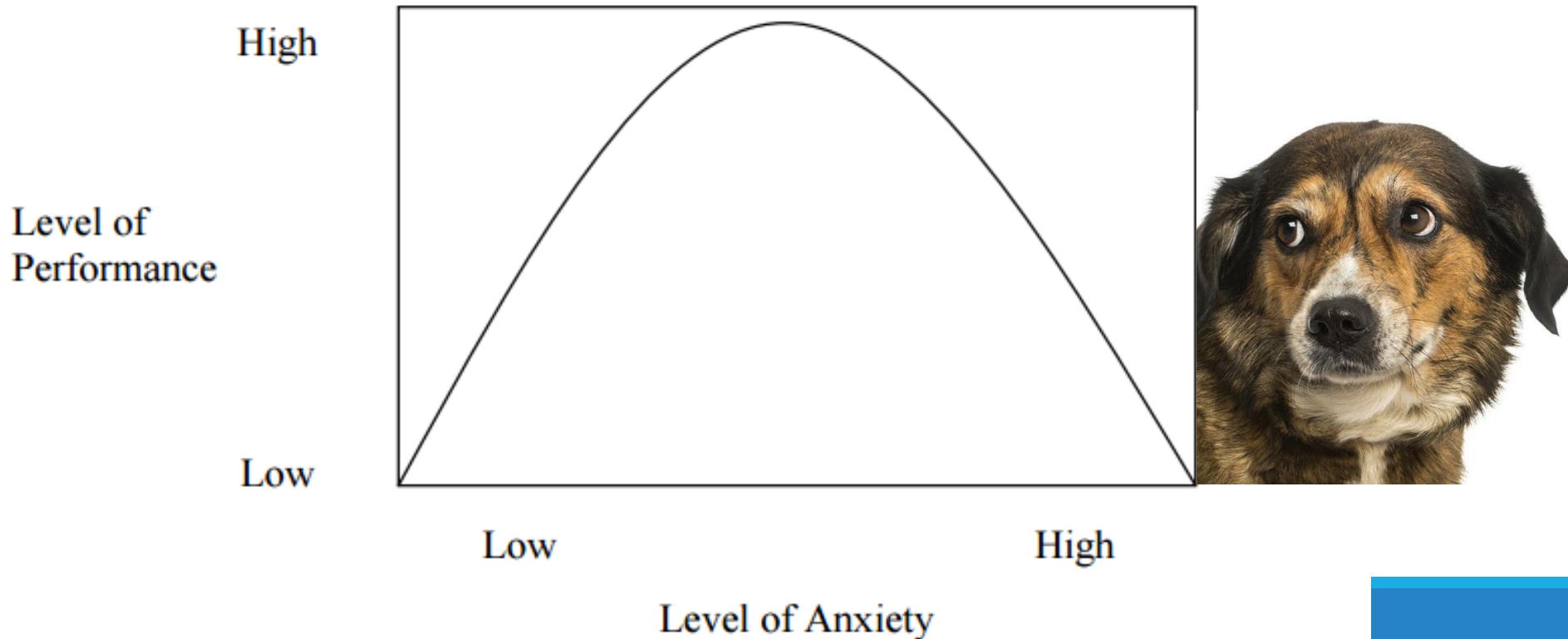
- Up the high value treat
- Change the tactic

Allergic/special diets

- Use hypoallergenic treats
- Have owners bring treats or food

It is difficult to learn when anxious or stressed, especially positive associations!

Relationship between Anxiety and Performance



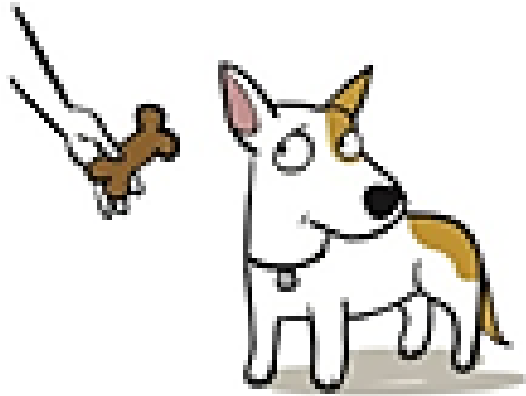
Anxious and aggressive patients



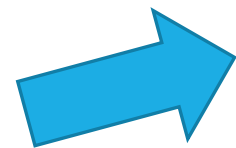
Recognize
early signs of
anxiety and
aggression

If signs of fear, anxiety or stress appear, STOP and reassess





Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Want?

- Is there a better approach?
- Counter condition
 - Touch
 - Procedure
- Reschedule
 - Technician education
 - +/- Anti-Anxiety Meds

Need?

- A better approach?
- Counter condition
- Medications
 - Anti-anxiety
 - Sedation
 - Anesthesia



BREATHE

Don't be afraid
to regroup!
Take a breath
and reassess



Your technicians can assist in client education and desensitization and counterconditioning procedures

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



Pre-medicate patients known to be
anxious & consider chemical restraint early



Pre-Visit
Pharmaceuticals vary
by individual: trial is
recommended

Reach for chemical restraint early



Low Stress Handling: Dog “Ninja” Sedation Technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kklnVGuPL8s&list=PLmfaCiERznhAwcRKhsvUMBbdscMrZqTwG&index=20>



Low Stress handling: Cat “Ninja” Cat Sedation Technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VliTIWQgv3U&list=PLmfaCiERznhAwcRKhsvUMBbdscMrZqTwG&index=21>

Follow up



End on a good note

Note in the chart what worked for this patient

FASHERE FAS Clinic Emotional Record

FAS Emotional Record

Reason for visit: annual

Dr cr

Tech

Preferred Location: Floor Table O's lap Outside Other

Motivated by/Likes: Treats Toys Petting Other

Gentle Control techniques: Gentle restraint Pheromones Muzzle Sedation Other

FAS Score: 0/5

Patient dislikes/FAS Triggers:

Additional notes: did very well for exam

Plan for reintroduction to home



Plan for next appointment

Consider different approach

Pre-medication or chemical restraint

Schedule 'happy visits'

Schedule desensitization and counterconditioning appointments



Resources

Organizations & Certifications

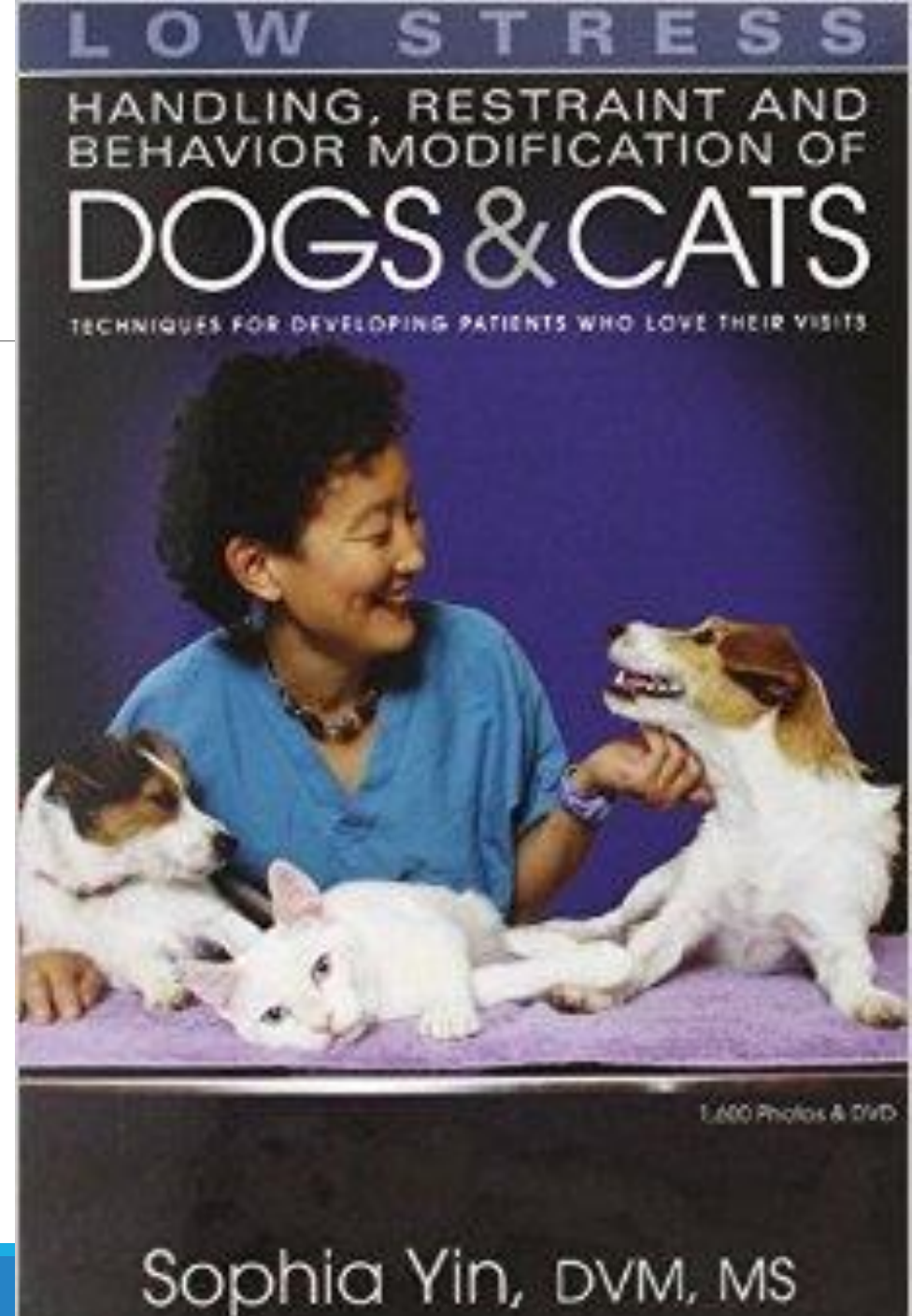
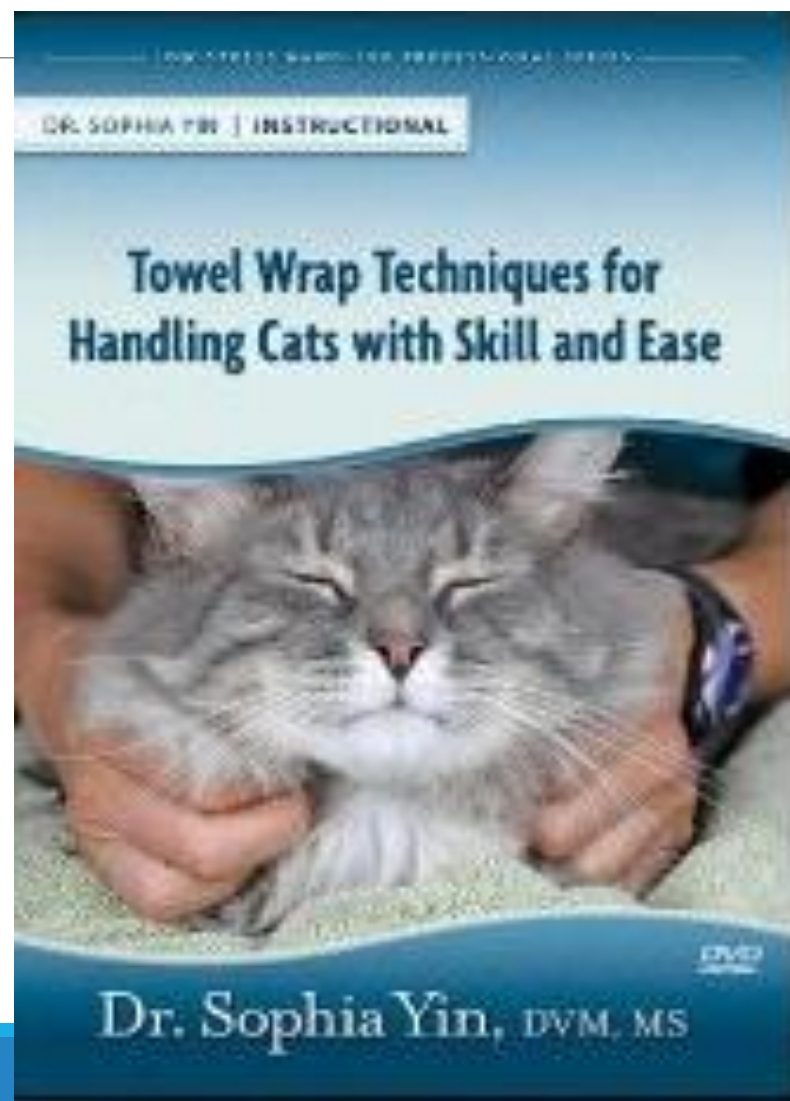
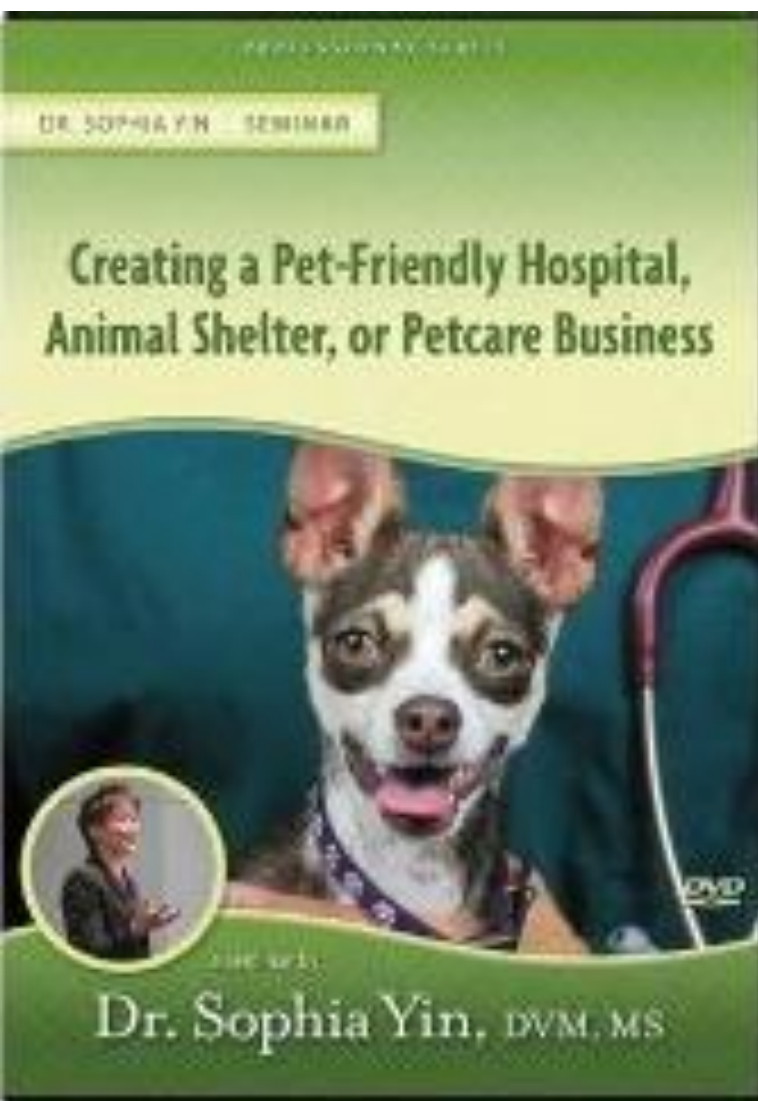


<https://lowstresshandling.com/>



<https://fearfreepets.com/>

Dr. Sophia Yin Resources



Canine and Feline Behavior

for Veterinary Technicians and Nurses



Canine and Feline
Behavior for
Veterinary
Technicians

Cooperative Veterinary Care

Alicea Howell
Monique Feyreclide



Cooperative Veterinary Care



WILEY Blackwell



Thank You!



drpankratz@animalbehaviorclinic.net

www.AnimalBehaviorClinic.net