

THE FEAR FREE APPROACH TO WELCOMING CLIENTS AND PATIENTS TO OUR PRACTICE



Client's First Call:

- The first contact is our best chance to make a great impression!
- Set ourselves apart by letting the client know how the Fear Free approach is different.
- Show we're concerned about his or her pet's emotional welfare and physical health.
- Be in it for the long haul; this is the first meeting of a long relationship.
- Ask the client to take the time to review the pre-visit document you'll send, which will include information on bringing the pet in hungry, why we give treats (if medically appropriate), and how we can support the pet if it experiences anxiety, such as providing "loaner" Thundershirts and pheromones.
- Make sure all these points are entered in the client notes for his or her visit.

Scheduling the Appointment:

- Make sure appointments are spread out over the course of the day rather than letting bottlenecks occur. Patient care and client welcome suffer when the schedule is overbooked.
- Be thoughtful with the art of scheduling, so cats, dogs, fearful pets, and assertive or noisy pets are able to find space away from each other.

On Arrival:

- Maintain a calm atmosphere. No slammed doors, loud phones, loud voices, or other disturbing sounds or activities. Think spa!
- If pets are not calm, see if they can wait in the car or exam room.
- Make sure pets don't bother other pets.
- Greet the pet respectfully and safely. Don't loom over the pet, but approach with a soft voice. Let the pets come to you.
- Give lots of treats! They should be happy to visit!

Exam Rooms:

- Make sure the pet's preferences and emotional needs are reflected in the notes and that those needs are met in terms of room stocking, treat types, etc.
- Exam table (if used) should match size and preference of pet.
- Cats are seen in cat-only rooms.
- Pheromone diffusers and spray bottles should be in all exam rooms.
- Lights should be low.
- Room should have soft, species-appropriate, calming music playing.
- Remind staff to keep voices low and not to slam doors.

Treats:

- Treat should be administered liberally (if medically appropriate); go for as many as 40 treats per visit.
- Give a treat when the pet comes in the door, when it gets on the scale, and when entering the exam room.
- Make notes of pet's favorite treats.