



## MODULE 8 - FEAR FREE TALKING POINTS

### Use anytime:

- Fear Free is a kinder, gentler way to handle your pet. It makes visits easier for them and you!
- Our team's special Fear Free<sup>SM</sup> training helps us work with your pet to make going to the veterinarian better – We don't want them afraid to go to come see us!
- It gives you a new way to partner in your pet's health care to make veterinary visits easier on them and more rewarding for you.
- We are one of only a few veterinary practice teams in the country able to offer this level of service for pets. Please let us know how we're doing!
- Our team members are trained in special Fear Free techniques to help calm your pet and reduce stress.
- The food treats will help to distract pet name in a rewarding way.
- Less stress for pet name means less stress for everybody!
- Does pet name get scared when you bring her in to see us? Let me tell you about our Fear Free program.
- We want pet name to be calm and relaxed when we take her blood pressure...
- Sometimes people worry about overmedicating their pets but we know that fear, anxiety, and stress potentially have worse effects on pet name's body than a dose of a calming medication.
- It's not just your pet, 75% of cats and dogs are frightened when visiting the veterinary hospital.
- If you don't mind, I'd like to have you put this bandana on pet name. It's been sprayed with a pheromone that is calming and relaxing to dogs.
- Drug name is a wonderful drug for reducing fear, anxiety, and stress. Most cats will eat it mixed in with something tasty.
- Our practice is the only one in the area with a Fear Free program.
- Food treats help to distract patients while they are undergoing procedures.
- Less stress for pet name also means less stress for you!

### Use at check-in:

- Have you heard about our new Fear Free program? Our goal is to make visits to the veterinary hospital less stressful for your pet. We would like pet name to wear this bandana because it is sprayed with a synthetic version of a pheromone that mother dogs produce when they are nursing puppies. It's a calming, soothing smell that helps dogs to be more relaxed while they are here. Is it OK if I put it on pet name or would it be better if you did?



**Use for every appointment you schedule, when prepping patient files for upcoming visits, or when doing estimates for upcoming appointments – if you think the patient will be anxious & no one has discussed Fear Free yet discuss it when you have the client in the practice or on the phone or call the client prior to a scheduled appointment:**

- Does your dog/cat become anxious or frightened when coming to the veterinarian? We can help to make things better by dispensing antianxiety medication for you to give pet name prior to your visit. This is especially important if your pet struggles or needs to be muzzled for procedures such as blood draws or nail trims, or if he/she shows obvious signs of stress like shivering, cowering, pacing, panting, or yawning when he/she is here or on the drive here. Do you notice any of these things? If yes: Our Calming packets include antianxiety medication, and for cats a calming pheromone product to wipe on the carrier before your visit. The kits cost \$\$ and we can mail one to you ahead of time if you like. (If the owner is interested explain medications and how to administer and what to watch for in more detail. Remember the medications should have been tried prior to the need.)

**Use when appointment is not going well:**

- We are not able to complete the procedure name on pet name because he/she is becoming too stressed. It is much safer for everyone if we reschedule his/her appointment for another day and dispense antianxiety medication to give pet name before the next visit. We will also give you a dose of the medication to give pet name on a day when you do not have an appointment and report back to us on how long before you saw effects of the drug, how calm/sleepy did pet name become, how long did the effects of the medication last, and if you notice any side effects. If we force pet name to tolerate the procedure when he/she is scared, things will be worse for us all later, as he/she will remember and show more fear the next time. Our goal is to make every visit at least pleasant, even if we can't make pet name happy.

**Use when confirming procedure/surgery appointments:**

- I/the doctor want(s) you to give pet name a portion of his/her pre-procedure sedative at home before arriving for his/her procedure. This will help to minimize fear, anxiety, and stress once he/she is here. When will it be convenient for you to pick this up? We will have it waiting for you. (Ideally this conversation would occur prior to the day before the scheduled procedure in consideration of the owner having time to pick up the medication.)

**Use at admissions or check-in for patients who have been previously identified as fearful:**

- Did pet name receive his/her name of medication earlier today? If yes: Great that will make things easier for him/her! If no you can say something like "Well, we will try and see how it goes. If pet name starts to show signs of fear or struggles too much we will have to reschedule.



**Use for new patients or those not previously identified as fearful who are observed to be stressed upon arrival:**

- I notice that pet name is panting and pacing and has his/her tail tucked (for cats: crouching in the back of his/her carrier and has urinated during the ride here). These are signs that he/she is fearful and anxious to be here. At our hospital we will not force fearful patients into submission and we are trained and certified in a specialized program called Fear Free which is designed to help fearful patients. We will get him/her into a quiet exam room as quickly as possible and try some of our Fear Free methods such as fill in methods to calm him/her and see how it goes. If pet name becomes more fearful and anxious we may recommend to reschedule the appointment and utilize calming medications before you leave home for the visit.