

Doing the Right Things for the Right Reasons Part 2 (Fear Free™)



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Four Foundational Principles

(These provide the lens)

1. Respect for Autonomy
2. Nonmaleficence
3. Beneficence
4. Justice/Fairness

Keep these in mind as we explore both *how* and *why* to do the right things for the right reasons

Autonomy & beneficence (patients)

Nonmaleficence & justice (clients)

Right Things, Right Reasons

Reminders:

Traditional medical ethics ultimately failed to keep up with emerging developments and advancements in medicine

Bioethics expanded perspective beyond traditional paternalistic relationship of doctor to patient

From "Doctor knows best" to "Shared decision-making"

Medical decision-making often not yes/no

It's all about discerning "should" from "can"

Right Things, Right Reasons

Fear Free™ (FF) principles and practices dovetail beautifully with bioethical principles and practices

These combine to provide a context within which practice can be transformed for:

Patients

Clients

Team members

First, an overview, and then execution ideas

Consider how the four foundational bioethical principles apply

Right Things, Right Reasons

FF strives to:

Alleviate fear, anxiety, & stress (FAS) in pets

Educate & inspire clients about what is possible for their pets both at the veterinary practice & at home

Elevate the veterinary health care team to a new level of compassionate care

Taking the "pet" out of petrified

Right Things, Right Reasons

An additional dimension embraces Cat Friendly Practice (CFP) principles (Feline VMA)

Both FF & CFP provide online learning

Focus on looking after patients' physical **AND** emotional well-being

Practical tools, protocols, & procedures well-suited for any practice - - large or small, no matter how busy

Enhances a client's relationship with and loyalty to the practice

Increases both safety and satisfaction within the health care team



Right Things, Right Reasons

Pet owners express worry & stress about taking their pets to the veterinarian (especially cat owners)

This translates to many dogs and cats not receiving the veterinary care they need and deserve

Lack of preventive care leads to late diagnoses or ER care

Which bioethical principles apply? To patients? To clients?

Right Things, Right Reasons

FAS creates obstacles to optimal pet care & safety

FAS occurs along a continuum from barely stressed to severely stressed

Severe FAS often results in aggression & labeling of patients as "bad actors"

Both a considerate approach to patients & communication with clients are critical

Cooperative care respects the patient's expressed preferences about handling (autonomy & beneficence)

Lowering FAS impacts clients as well (nonmaleficence & justice/fairness)

Right Things, Right Reasons

Dog Body Postures:



Mouth open
Lips long and soft
Ears forward
Face soft and loose
Pupils normal size
Flexible neck to tail
Relaxed tail at topline



Dilated pupils
Tense face
Wrinkled brow
Tail down
Body lowered

Right Things, Right Reasons

Cat Body Postures:



Face soft
Ears forward
Pupils almond shaped
Tail away from body
Relaxed musculature



Hissing Lips drawn back
Ears out to the side Body crouched
Pupils dilated (round)
Tail tucked around body Back arched



Right Things, Right Reasons

Multiple inputs either contribute to or reduce FAS - - input from the patients themselves, the environment (both getting to the practice & within the practice), owner anxiety, & how the health care team interacts with them

Environmental stressors:

Humidity, noise, odor, bright lights, fast moving objects, pheromones

Physiologic stressors:

Pain, hunger, thirst, illness

Handling-related stressors:

Unfamiliar people, separation from owners

Right Things, Right Reasons

Stressors cause both immediate and delayed responses

Immediate - -

Sympathetic/adrenal "dump"

Increased HR, increased RR, & blood shunted to muscles

Decreased rational thought, pain perception, & memory retrieval

Delayed - -

IBD, ulcers, mm wasting, fatigue, delayed healing

Right Things, Right Reasons

Fear response - -

- NO cognitive control

- Vivid sensory memories

- Easily retrieved bad memories (cats *never* forget)

- Fear flooding that overcomes training

4 F's in response to fear:

- Fight, Flight, Freeze, & Fidget



Right Things, Right Reasons

FF happens best when it happens young

Teach puppies & kittens to LOVE seeing people, including healthcare providers

For those who are already afraid there is MUCH we can do:

Receiving area *not* a waiting room

Pheromones in all the appropriate areas of the practice -
Reception, exam rooms, treatment, housing areas

Digital baby scale for cats & tiny dogs

Treats, treats, & more treats

Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution:

Gather necessary supplies before entering the exam/
treatment space to get started

Treats of various kinds

Withhold all or part of a meal before the scheduled
visit/treatment, and have the client bring kibbles
or favorite treats

Clients can bring a favorite toy, blanket, etc.

Do your best to witness the visit through the eyes of the
patient

Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution:

Non-skid area rugs, mats, or yoga mats on exam tables (cats & small dogs) & on the floor for medium/large dogs

iCalm Pet speakers (species specific)

Perform tasks in the exam room with their humans present whenever possible - - pets want reassurance (there *will* be the occasional exception - Roxy)



Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution (cat specific):

Designated "cat only" examination room(s) - no dogs allowed!

Some cats prefer the floor or your lap to the table

Natural or incandescent light - -

Dilated pupils, sensitive retinas, fear of quick movements

iCalm Cat (or other species-specific music)

Warm towels/flannels ("hot yoga blankets") spritzed w/
Feliway



Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution (cat specific):

Eliminate clutter from the counters

Carriers that pop open on top (remove top half when needed - stop "extracting" cats!)

Have clients make carriers regular "furniture" at home

Place carrier on the floor in the cat only room

Open the door to encourage exploration

Have owner provide a towel, t-shirt, bed that smells like the cat and/or owner inside carrier

Place carriers (door removed) in cat cages

Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution (cat specific):

Households with both dogs & cats, a "mixed" exam room

Both pheromones & natural or incandescent light

One-handed blood draws

Nurse just supports cat's body, water to show vein,
clip hair if needed (quiet portable clippers)

No stretching!

Fractious cats/"bad actors"

Some have had bad vet experience

MOST are PAINFUL!!

Right Things, Right Reasons

Bad experiences - -

Dogs can often "unlearn" previous bad experiences but
cats *never* forget

Cannot "think" their way out of their FAS response

The amygdala takes over and the cortex is clouded

Painful cats - -

We label them as bad/unreasonable but for them touching
is torture

Right Things, Right Reasons

More FF execution (cat specific):

PVP is transformational

Single 100mg dose of gabapentin *three - four hours* pre-appointment (no need for night before dose)

Can use 200mg if needed - - will NOT cause harm!

No dissociatives!

Some cats need injectables

Ace (0.01mg/kg) + hydro (0.05mg/kg) +/- $\frac{1}{4}$ dose
midazolam (Based on pre-anaesthesia doses)

(See the Fear Free™ website/resources for canine PVP options)



Right Things, Right Reasons

Back to "bad actors" - -

Older pets may be fearful because they are PAINFUL!

While animals cannot and do not anticipate or fear their own death, they certainly do anticipate and fear PAIN

Any pet that is reluctant to be handled must have the benefit of our concern that they may be painful

Is it unreasonable for them to fear the pain of being handled and do their best to avoid it?

We have a moral obligation to identify them and then "fix" their pain

Right Things, Right Reasons

Reducing FAS benefits all participants

Our ethical obligation to our patients (autonomy & beneficence) and their humans (nonmaleficence & justice) is to reduce FAS whenever, wherever, and however possible

This is a very different way to handle patients - - to consider medical experiences & treatments their perspective

This is a *very exciting* way to work once you see the results!

Head to:

www.fearfree.com

www.fearfreehappyhomes.com

Thank you!

*See you next
session*

