**Tips and Tricks for Incorporating Behavior into Day to Day Operations**

Many of us struggle with meeting our animals’ behavioral needs.

Where to start – evaluate yourself against the standards – how do you measure up?

[**Shelter Checklists**](https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/shelter-checklists-based-asv-guidelines) **Based on ASV Guidelines page 27** \*Note that there is a [new edition of the guidelines](https://www.sheltervet.org/guidelines-for-standards-of-care-in-animal-shelters); however, the new checklists have not been shared yet.

Large behavior team that we all desire (similar to a vet team)

Many have tried, many have failed, many have just given up and moved on. This has been the case for over my 30+ years.

For some reason we can’t get there. What else can we do?

Teach/Train and rely solely on others to do daily implementation of programs/plans

* Staff / Volunteers / Interns / Foster parents

Becomes part of general operations

* Treat buckets / Quiet kennel (pennies from above) / Animal communication / body language / safe handling / Hide, perch, scratch

Create/Build a culture that includes general feed/clean/disease control / medical along with – behavior best practices

● Firstly it needs to be the organization’s goal to have a holistic approach to animal

wellbeing.

● Behavior is not a chore is a culture that needs to be embraced by all

● Embrace the [Five Domains of Animal Welfare](https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-are-the-five-domains-and-how-do-they-differ-from-the-five-freedoms/)

● Review Intake policies on behavior (What resources do you have to manage problem

behaviors)

● [Animal handling policy](https://forum.maddiesfund.org/viewdocument/animal-handling-policy?CommunityKey=afce7f7a-fd5a-431e-9f2a-aaedc46a03d6&tab=librarydocuments)

● Build a team that makes you look good

○ (e.g., Teacher/Marine Mammal trainer – can go well or not so well)

○ I hired the teacher who was doing animal care. You don’t need another you.

● Why are you there? What’s your goal? Chunk it down into smaller bites (sound familiar

animal trainers?)

● Euthanasia review monthly (Directors / Supervisors start at Department Level) judgment

free it’s how to improve. Find out what resources you need (Throwing people at it doesn’t

work) Be Challenged “in a professional manner”

● Depending on your position, understand your budget (at least a little) What do your higher ups

need to justify the expenditure (that cost could simple be time)

● Set your policies (Animal Handling, Treat Pouches, Clickers, Verbal Tone)

● People can be resistant to change/feedback (You catch more flies with honey than

vinegar)

● Get them adopted if they’re safe “Fast Track”. Each organization will be different. Rehabbing

takes a large amount of resources, which few organizations have. Use resources strategically and build capacity over time, for programs that keep pets out of shelters or get them into homes.

● Have education materials / resources on hand (Get your organization to invest)

● Set expectations from the staff (Tell me what you see not what you think)

● Behavioral definitions, all speak the same language

● Use data, daily reports, animal status reports ([Maddie’s Community Conversations: Data](https://forum.maddiesfund.org/discussion/community-conversations-1923-go-with-the-flow-increasing-efficiencies-using-animal-data#bm458d5c29-e3cc-4d9e-8a8a-d8b3f5d3f767))

● Training animals is not behavior mod, it’s a part of it.

● We build “Trust Banks” in animals, why not your people?

It will take time, there are things I presented 8 years ago that are now just happening. Set priorities and have at it. You can make it happen