
Max Capacity:

Getting Smart and Strategic About Capacity for Care Challenges

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Remember

Throughout this presentation, remember **there is no magic number.**

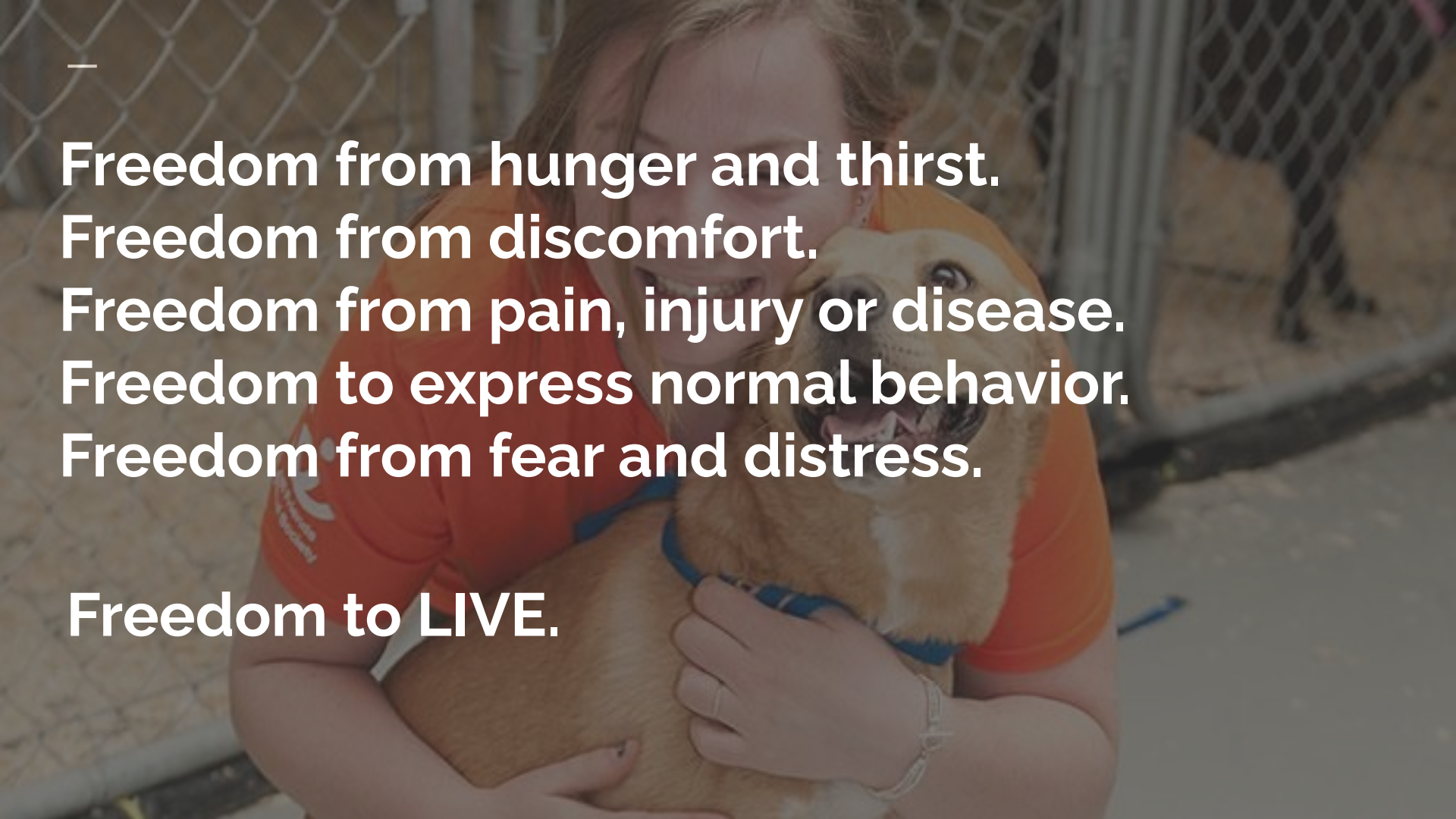
- **Define goals.**
Make clear, objective and most importantly - realistic - goals. You can always surpass them!
- **How do you measure success?**
Lower cost per animal? Improved morale?.
- **Analyze and modify.**
Continually evaluate your data and modify your strategies and goals.

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**Capacity for care (C4C),
considered holistically,
means meeting the needs of
each animal admitted to the
shelter.**

The **FIVE
FREEDOMS OF
ANIMAL
WELFARE** provide us
with the framework to
define what it means to
meet the needs of any
animal in confinement.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing an orange t-shirt, is smiling and hugging a golden retriever puppy. The puppy is also wearing an orange shirt and a blue collar. They are standing in front of a chain-link fence. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the fence and some foliage.

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**Freedom from hunger and thirst.
Freedom from discomfort.
Freedom from pain, injury or disease.
Freedom to express normal behavior.
Freedom from fear and distress.**

Freedom to LIVE.

“Every sheltering organization has a maximum capacity for care, and the population in their care must not exceed that level.”

- *Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*



Hours per animal.

How much time do your team members have to dedicate to each animal if you are at maximum capacity?

→ **Total physical capacity.**

How many animals CAN your shelter hold (notice we don't say SHOULD!).

→ **Total hours per day.**

Number of animal care team members per day x hours per team member.

→ **Hours per day / total capacity = time per animal (in hours).**



Physical capacity vs. flow capacity.

No amount of physical holding capacity will be sufficient to resolve issues with homeless and abandoned animals in a community.

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“But I can’t control my
capacity.”

Guess what, you can!

Length of stay.

The optimal length of stay is defined as **the shortest possible time to reach the best possible outcome for each animal** given the capacity of both the organization and the community.





Shelter A

Shelter A admits **1,200 animals per year**, or 100/month.

→ **LOS = 1 month.**

1 month x 100 animals per month = **100 animals per day**.



Shelter B

Shelter B also admits **1,200 animals per year**, or 100/month.


→ **LOS = 2 weeks.**

0.5 month x 100 animals per month = **50 animals per day**.

Ways to reduce LOS.

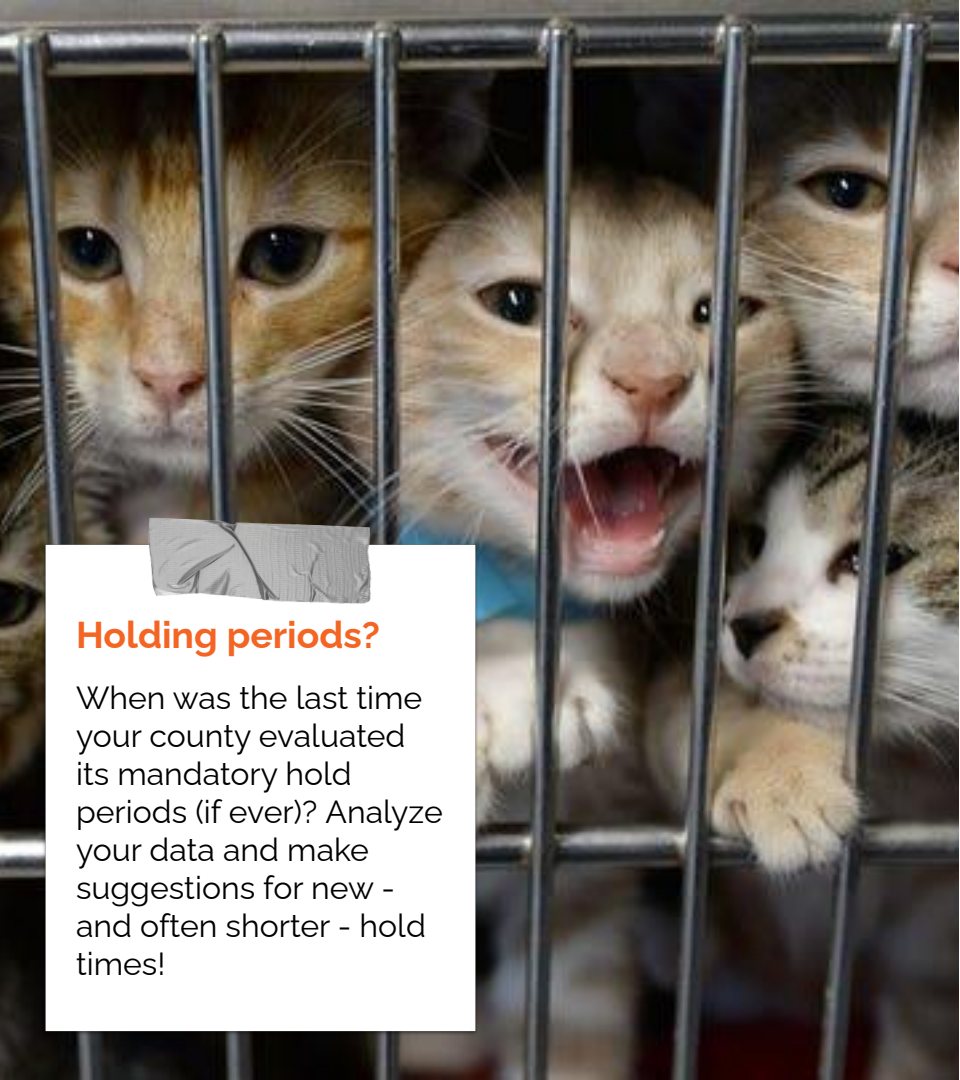
There are a variety of protocols, programs and operational adjustments every organization can make to reduce an animal's length of stay.





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**Managed, or “planned” admission.
Ready, set, go programs.
Finder to foster.
Rescues and fosters “on deck.”
Surrender prevention.**



Holding periods?

When was the last time your county evaluated its mandatory hold periods (if ever)? Analyze your data and make suggestions for new - and often shorter - hold times!

Pre-adoption LOS.

Reconsider intake quarantines.

Scheduled surgeries.

Re-evaluate (pun intended) behavior assessments.

Identify fast track vs. slow track animals.

Identify opportunities for cross-training team members.

Open selection or “pre-adoption.”

Adoption LOS

Strategic marketing and photographs.

Proactive adoption promotions.

Adoption driven capacity.

Actively prevent bonus length of stay.





Bonus LOS

When it comes to LOS, **less is more**. Despite an organization's best operational adjustments to manage admission and population, poor housing or lack of overall wellness can lead to more time in the shelter due to illness or behavioral deterioration.

→ **Housing**

Freedom from discomfort (and often illness)

→ **Species-specific enrichment**

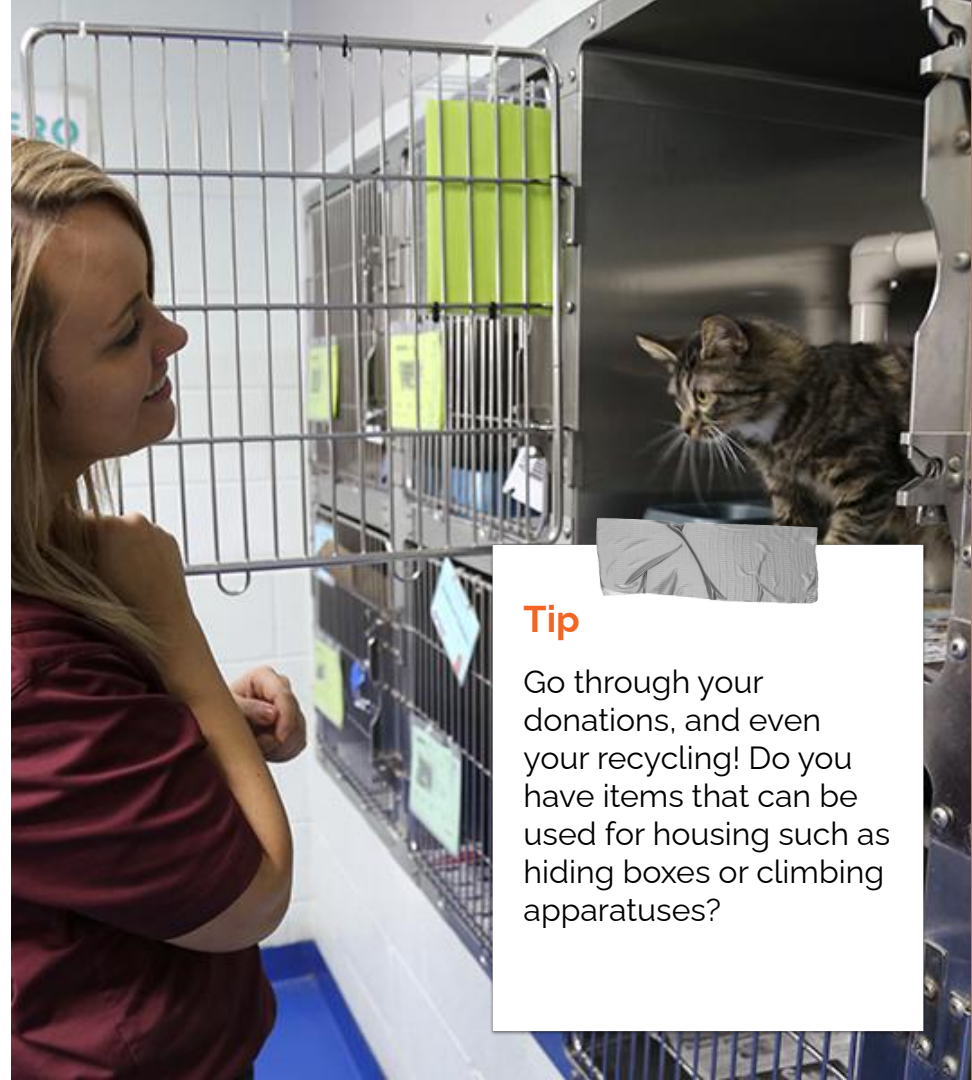
Freedom to express normal behavior

Housing.

We can't all have fancy enclosures or communal rooms; however, there are a variety of inexpensive (or even free) things we can and should do to improve our residents' housing areas.



PORTHOLES BEDS
TOYS COMPANIONS
HIDE
CLEAN VERTICAL
SPACE CLIMB REST
MORE TOYS! LESS CATS
BARRIERS BLANKETS



Tip

Go through your donations, and even your recycling! Do you have items that can be used for housing such as hiding boxes or climbing apparatuses?



Behavioral health.

Behavioral and emotional health should be just as important as physical health for the animals in your care.

(Probably for your team members, too!)

Impacting behavioral health.

Passive enrichment.

Toys, puzzle feeders, scents, auditory/music, visual (think, cat tv!), etc.

Active enrichment.

Clicker training (this should be ALL species), exercise/walks, out of kennel/office break, off site outing, etc.

Social enrichment.

Co-housing (when appropriate), playgroups, sleepovers.

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The best way to help
the animals in your
care is to know **who**
they are and what
they need.



Daily Rounds

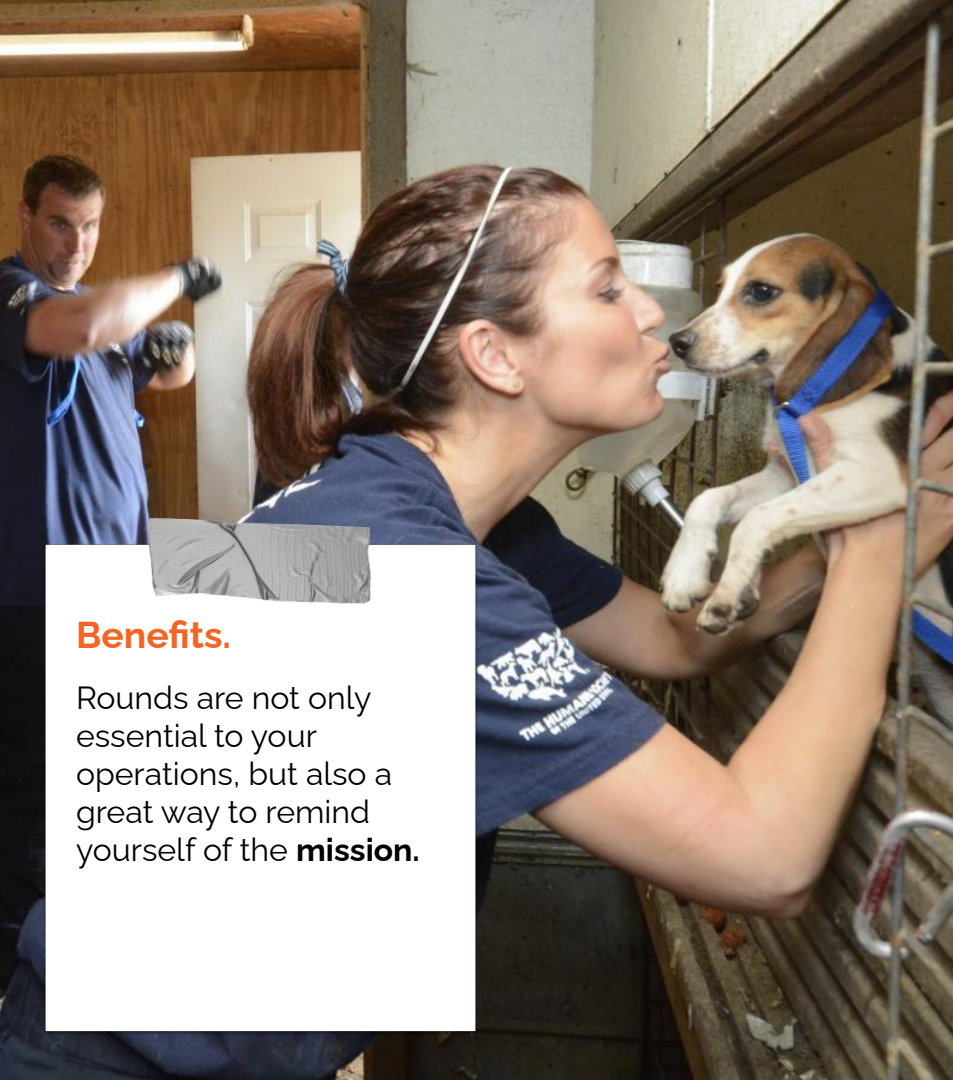
Walking through your facility every day is essential to helping animals move through the flow as quickly, and accurately, as possible.

→ **Every animal, every day.**

Rounds are only effective when performed every day.

→ **Who?**

Team should consist of team members from operations, medical, behavior, foster and the population manager (typically, animal intake).



Benefits.

Rounds are not only essential to your operations, but also a great way to remind yourself of the **mission**.

Daily rounds.

Are you where you are supposed to be? (both physically and in the flow process). Correct stage, location?

How can I get you to where you need to be? Next steps?

Do you need anything scheduled? Expedite? Are you fast track?

What can I do for you today? Are you comfortable? Need litter box changed?



Get your C4C on!

Capacity for Care means what is right for your organization and your animals.