

Canine Behavioural School

Operational practices



Transparency statement on philosophy, methodology and equipment

Philosophy

CBS has a philosophy to not only “do good,” but to “do no harm.” Because of this ethos, CBS believes that the following equipment is, by design, intended to manipulate, change and manage behavior by an approach using pain, force, or fear and as such is deemed non-negotiable. Shock collars, prong collars, and choke collars are not used in any way and for any purpose in the training or care of pets.

Volunteers also recognise the fault in approaching training as just a systematical operant or respondent procedure, without taking into consideration the pet’s emotional, physical, and environmental wellbeing, is counterproductive to ensuring a behaviorally sound and empowered pet.

Methodology

Volunteers are informed by science, guided by empathy, and governed by ethics. CBS does not promote any individual humane hierarchy but allows each professional the autonomy to determine their methodology of choice. Volunteers pledge to approach behavior, training, and care using humane, ethical, and force-free procedures. The preferred and most prevalent approach is the use of positive reinforcement-based operant conditioning and respondent conditioning. This approach recognises that animals are sentient beings and that there is a powerful need to protect and safeguard their emotional, behavioral, and environmental wellbeing at all times. Volunteers choose not to use any training approach that works through pain, force, fear, or by eliciting a startle or alarm reaction

Definition of force

No definition can ever be so expansive and explicit that every possible situation is addressed. This is universal in its application. A good example is the legal system where, very often, courts cannot agree on a single interpretation of what terms and definitions mean – including physical force. Recognising this, in the context of its ethics and as a general framework, CBS defines physical force as any intentional physical act against a pet that causes psychological or physical pain, harm or damage to the pet.

Equipment

CBS makes clear to the public that its volunteers choose to use training equipment that does NOT rely on pain, force or fear, or anything that may elicit a startle or alarm reaction. Certain equipment is covered above as non-negotiable. The use of many (or even most) harnesses, head halters, collars (non-choking), and leashes would not be considered physical force under this guiding definition if:

- they are used consistently with our principles
- they are used as intended and designed
- they are not used in a way that is contrary to their design and intent, i.e., not used in a manner that would cause psychological or physical pain, harm, or damage.