

# Challenge, choice, and control provide opportunities for animals to have a good life

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## Key Points

- Animal welfare is an academic discipline AND property of sentient animals.
- The Five Domains Model gives us a structure to systematically **assess** animal welfare that aligns with this way of thinking.
- The Five Domains Model can also help us consider how best to **care for** animals – in policy and practice.

# What is animal welfare?

**Animal Welfare**

Science

Ethics

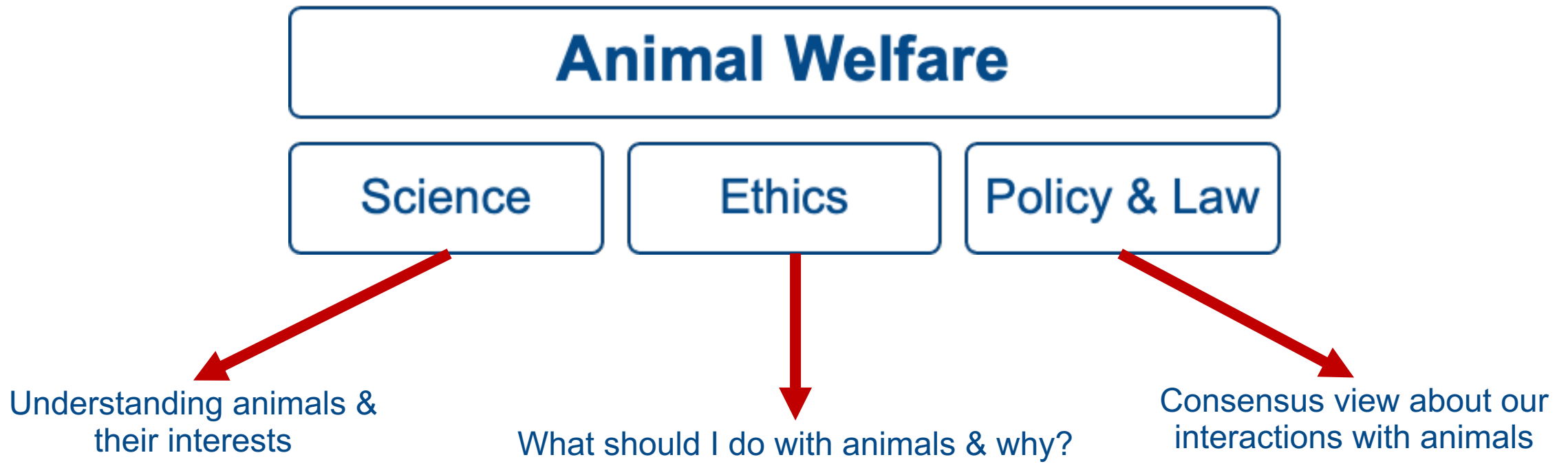
Policy & Law

&

**Animal Welfare**



# Animal welfare is an academic discipline



# Animal welfare is a property of sentient animals

- Animal welfare state = overall mental (affective) experiences of animal
  - An animal has welfare that we can assess
- Not resources or management applied to animal
  - **Animal care**
- What matters to animal = how they subjectively experience their situation

**Synonyms**  
Wellbeing  
Quality of life

**Animal Welfare**



# Animal welfare & sentience are inextricably linked

Welfare consideration  
is given to sentient  
animals

**Welfare  
requires  
capacity for  
sentience**

**Sentience is  
the capacity  
to have  
welfare**

*Sentient animals  
have welfare that  
matters to them*

## Animal welfare is a property of sentient animals

- Animal welfare state = overall mental (affective) experiences of animal
  - An animal has welfare that we can measure

**If animal welfare is a subjective concept,  
how do we evaluate it in animals?**

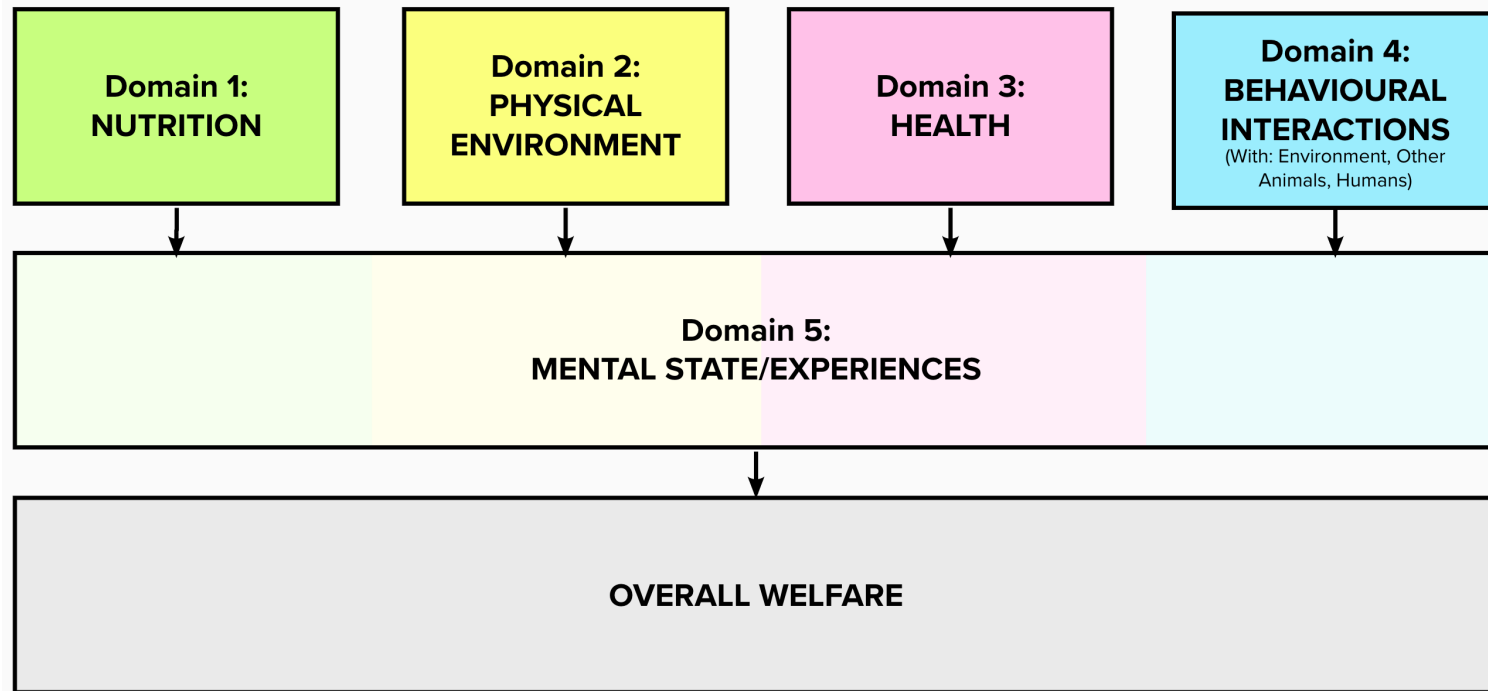
- What matters to animal = how they subjectively experience their situation





# Five Domains Model overview

Basis of welfare assessment for **at least 56** NGOs, industry bodies, & companies worldwide



European Parliament & **WOAH** considering transition to Five Domains as framework for AW laws & codes

Mellor, D. J., Beausoleil, N. J., Littlewood, K. E., McLean, A. N., McGreevy, P. D., Jones, B., & Wilkins, C. (2020). The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including human-animal interactions in assessments of animal welfare. *Animals*, 10(10), 1–24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ani10101870>

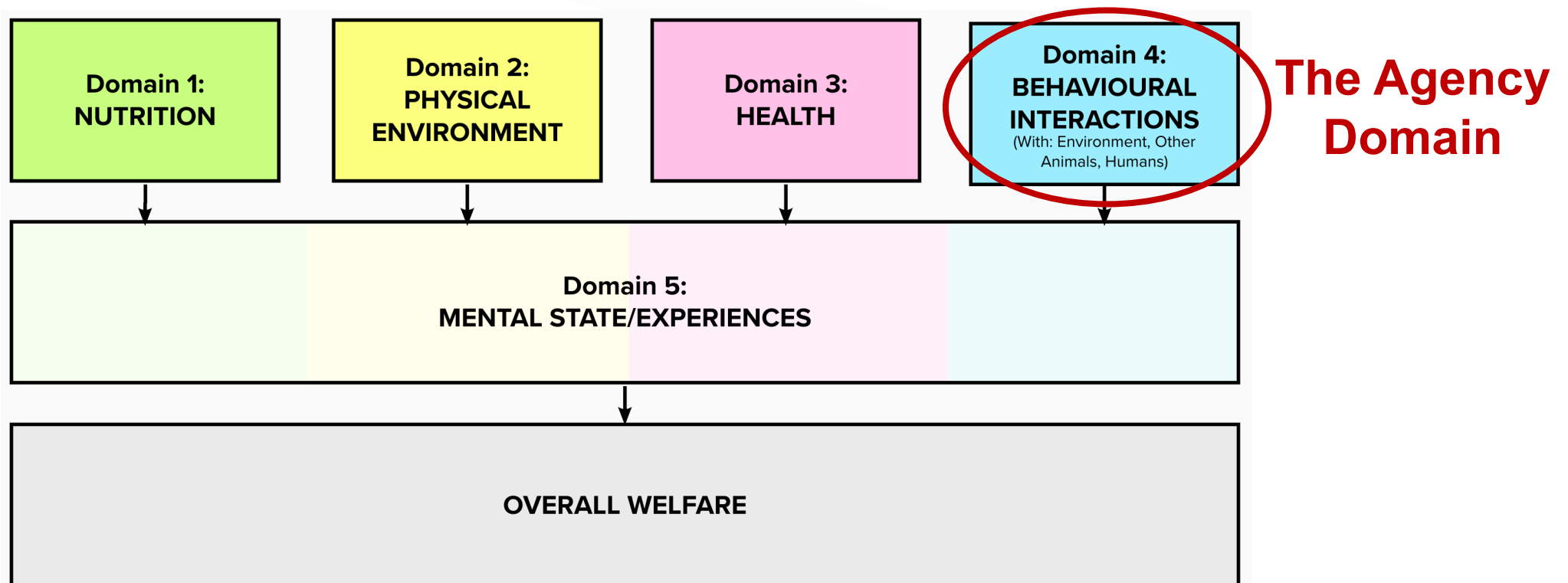


## Domains 1, 2, 3 – Nutrition, Physical Environment, & Health

- Restrictions in these domains can lead to welfare **compromise**
- Provisions can achieve **neutral** overall welfare (at best)



# Five Domains Model for welfare assessment



Mellor, D. J., Beausoleil, N. J., Littlewood, K. E., McLean, A. N., McGreevy, P. D., Jones, B., & Wilkins, C. (2020). The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including human–animal interactions in assessments of animal welfare. *Animals*, 10(10), 1–24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ani10101870>

## Domain 4 – Behavioural Interactions (“The Agency Domain”)

- An animal exercises ‘agency’ when they engage in **voluntary, self-generated** and **goal-directed** behaviours

**Agentic qualities:** Agency is enhanced when an animal...

- Can choose between two or more options (**Choice**)
- Can *consistently* and *predictably* make choices and obtain outcomes they are motivated to achieve (**Control**)
- Has complex interactions that encourage learning and/or physical fitness (**Challenge**)



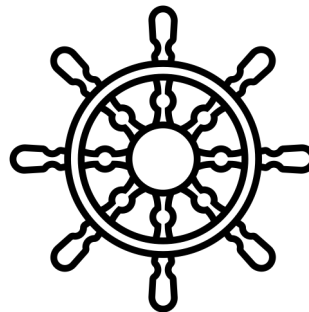
## Domain 4 – Behavioural Interactions (“The Agency Domain”)

- **Choices and sense of ‘being in control’**

→ **Competent animal** – has tools and strategies to deal with novel and ongoing challenges

- During interactions with:

- Environment
- Other Animals
- **Humans**



### OPEN ACCESS

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## The agency domain and behavioral interactions: assessing positive animal welfare using the Five Domains Model

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Animal welfare denotes how an animal experiences their life. It represents the overall mental experiences of an animal and is a subjective concept that cannot be directly measured. Instead, welfare indicators are used to cautiously infer mental experiences from resource provisions, management factors, and animal-based measures. The Five Domains Model is a holistic and structured framework for collating these indicators and assessing animal welfare. Contemporary approaches to animal welfare management consider how animals can be given

## Agentic Interactions with Humans



<https://karenpryoracademy.com/how-to-teach-a-chin-rest/>

### Cooperative care protocols and animal consent, e.g., chin rest in dogs

= training animals to make informed choices (i.e., consent) about their management

- Allow animals to consent and withdraw their consent at any time
- Informed **choice** involves some level of predictability (i.e., **control**)
- An animal who can exert **control** may be more likely to engage in **challenging** interactions

**Choice Control Challenge**

## Domain 4 – Behavioural Interactions

- **Negative experiences** associated with D4 often require human intervention to correct
  - “Environmental enrichment”
- When interventions successful → **positive** affective experiences
  - This is how **enrichments can promote positive welfare**

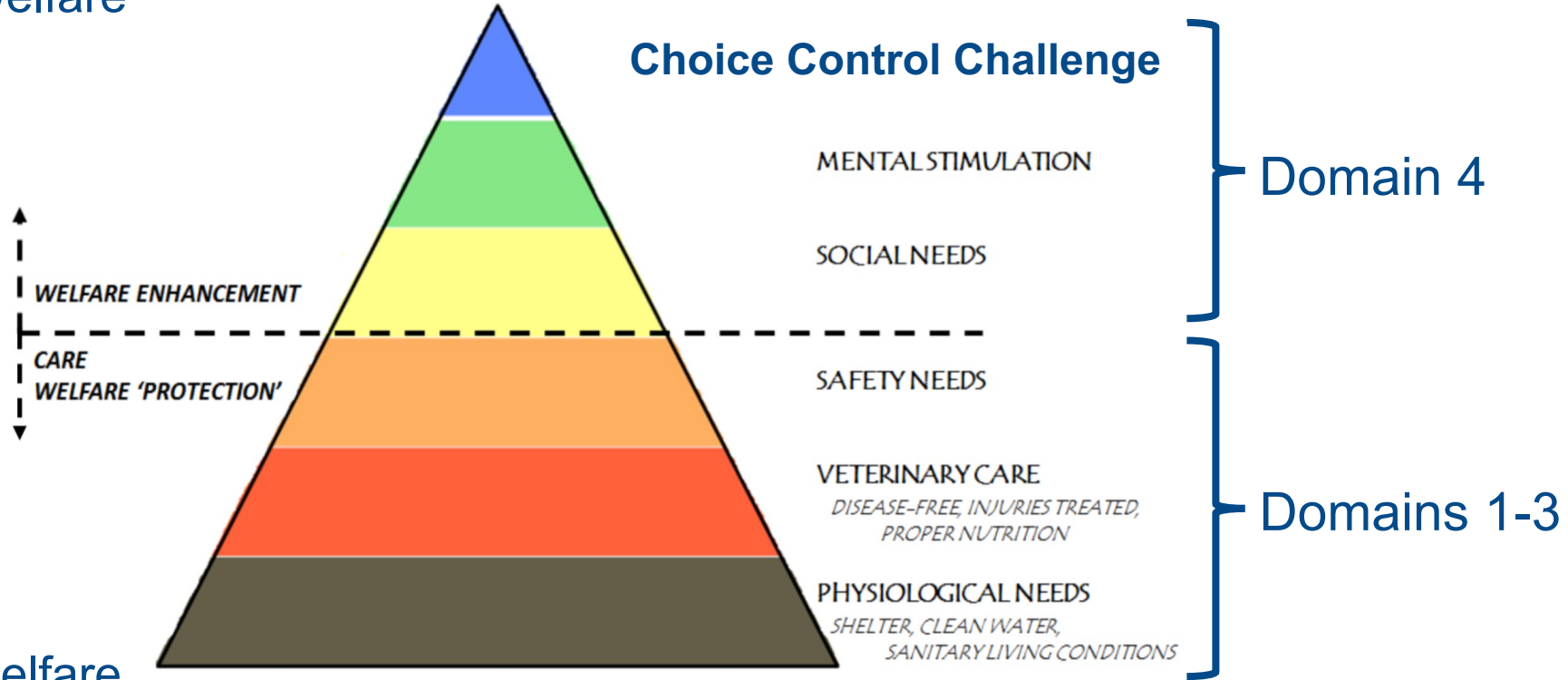


# Not just avoiding compromise

Very good welfare

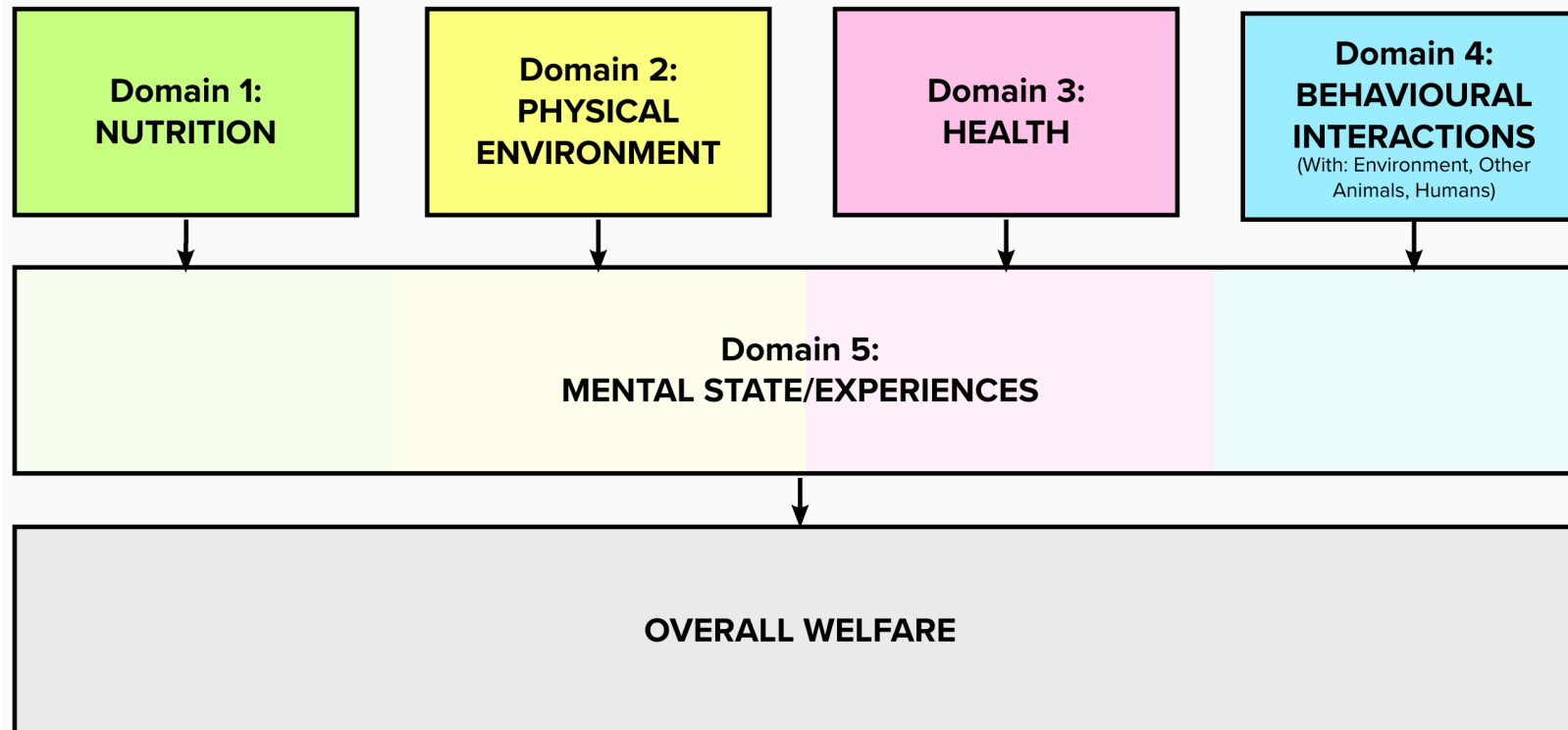


Very poor welfare





## Five Domains Model for welfare assessment (animal-centric)



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## Integrating the Five Domains into animal care & policy

- Human-centric?
- Animal law defines **human responsibilities** to animals ('person in charge')
- Uses criteria for human responsibility
  - Characterises **prevention of ill treatment** – unnecessary or unreasonable pain or distress
  - Characterises **positive duty of care**...



## Positive duty of care

### *Obligations of owners and of persons in charge of animals*

#### 10 **Obligation in relation to physical, health, and behavioural needs of animals**

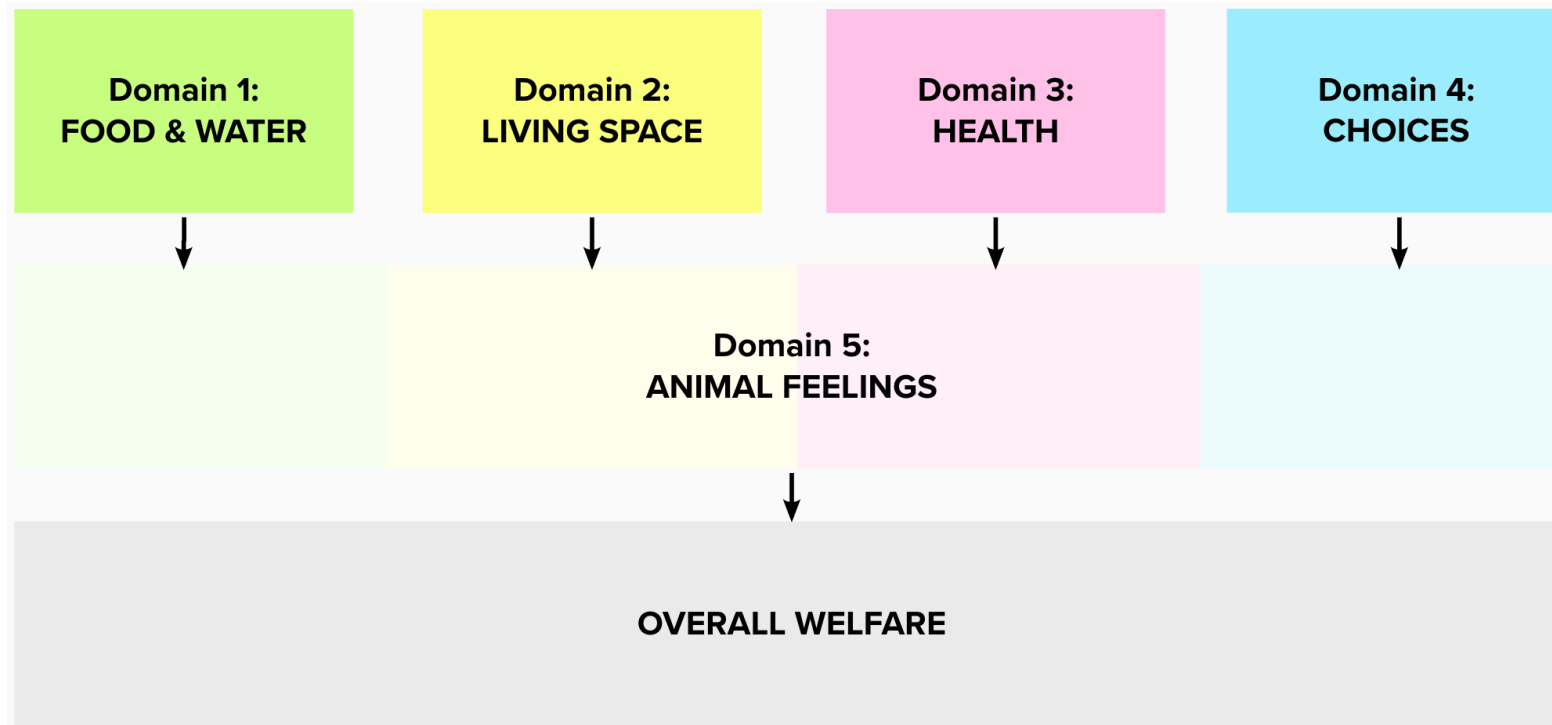
The owner of an animal, and every person in charge of an animal, must ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of the animal are met in a manner that is in accordance with both—

- (a) good practice; and
- (b) scientific knowledge.

- Characterising AW ‘needs’ risks **reducing the responsibility** of the keeper/owner to solely neutralising negative experiences
  - Versus: promoting positive experiences that would **enhance AW**

# Five Domains of Animal Care (human-centric)

  
Animal needs?



  
Animal interests?

“...promote the best **interests** of animals...”  
(BVA AW Policy Position 2021)

## The Human-Animal Bond

“The human-animal bond is a **mutually beneficial** and **dynamic** relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors considered essential to the **health and wellbeing of both.**” (AVMA)

### Potential Issues:

- Assumes close (‘bonded’) relationships with animals and excludes less bonded owners/guardians
- Assumes animals feel the same way about the interaction as bonded owners/guardians → animals treated inappropriately, e.g., kissing/cuddling

**RISK: Human-animal bond is not animal-centric. It is (some) human-centric.**



<https://www.npr.org/2016/04/30/476212898/lets-not-hug-it-out-with-our-dogs>

## Summary of Key Points

- **Animal welfare is an academic discipline AND property of sentient animals**
  - Animal Welfare is transdisciplinary: Science, Ethics, Policy, & Law
  - Animals have welfare – focus on mental experiences
- **The Five Domains Model gives us a structure to systematically assess animal welfare in a way that aligns with this way of thinking.**
- **The Five Domains Model can also help us to consider how best to care for animals – in policy & practice.**

## Summary

**Challenge, choice, and control provide opportunities for animals to have a good life**

*“There is an opportunity to move animal welfare legislation from the “Five Needs” to the “Five Domains” to better reflect our current understanding of animal welfare assessment and management.”*

**(BVA Animal Welfare Policy Position 2021)**



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