Abstract - Carter

Whose problems are ‘behaviour problems’?

Is it ‘bad’ owners or ‘bad’ dogs and cats?

This presentation will reframe how we look at behaviour problems, and use of the ‘bad’ label.

Behaviours can be undesirable from the animal’s perspective, from the owner’s perspective and sometimes from both perspectives. From my perspective as a veterinary specialist in animal behaviour, most behaviour problems stem from the animal and/or the owner trying to get their needs met, and to adapt or cope successfully in their environment.

We will navigate how to balance the needs of pets and care-givers to maintain a safe, secure and lasting human-animal bond, especially in the face of undesirable behaviours (from both pets and care-givers). We will explore why dogs and cats may behave in undesirable ways, considering the roles of physical health, mental health, learning and care-giver behaviour. We will conclude that building a successful relationship with our pets starts with understanding each other, a little compromise and of course love and compassion.

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