



Position Statement on Positive Based Training – November 2020

HSCC firmly advocates for the use of rewards-based, force-and-fear free training with the goal of putting the least possible amount of stress on the pet. The first line strategy should include changing an animal's environment to eliminate the problem behavior, followed by reinforcing alternate, desired behaviors. **We oppose the use of training methods and equipment that cause physical discomfort and undue anxiety, as the scientific research shows that these strategies risk causing more stress, increasing unwanted behaviors (including but not limited to learned helplessness, destructive behavior, increased reactivity, increased defensiveness and aggression), and potential injury to animals and people.** Similarly, we also do not advocate for the implementation of "dominance"-based training strategies in dogs, as there is little to no evidence for its efficacy or accuracy in describing canine learning and behavior. Instead, we support the use of modern, evidence-based force-and-fear free training methods as they encourage the development of more effective communication between people and their companion animals, strengthens the human-animal bond, and have been shown to be highly effective in modifying unwanted behaviors.

We acknowledge that there are many different opinions about training companion animals and an overwhelming number of options available to pet owners. It is only more recently that the evidence of the risks inherent in punishment/aversive-based training methods has come to light . **We do not and never intend to pass judgement on our community members , and hope that the above statement can be viewed as informative, educational, and a starting point for more conversations about how we can best care for our beloved pets.**

Additional Resources:

<https://www.companionanimalpsychology.com/2017/02/what-is-positive-reinforcement-in-dog.html>

<https://www.companionanimalpsychology.com/p/resources.html>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1558787817300357>

<https://www.dacvb.org/page/PositionStatement>

<https://avsab.org/resources/position-statements/>